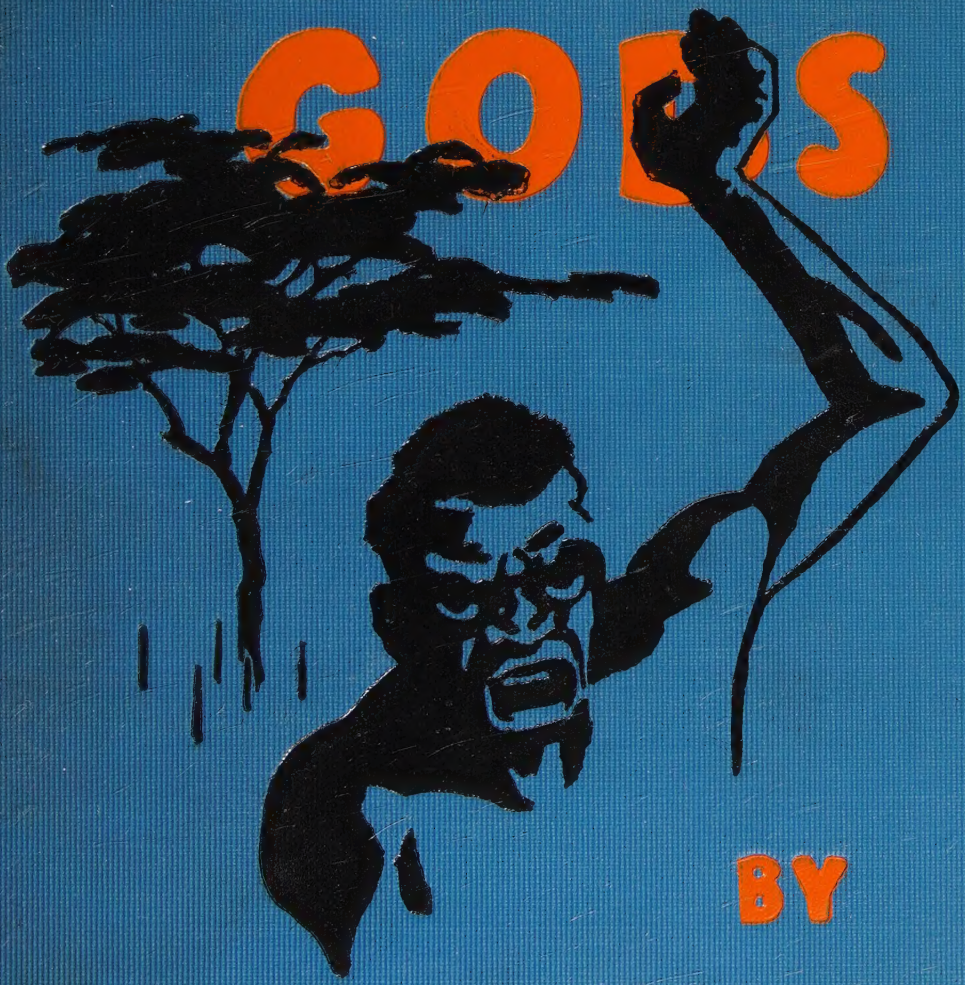
JUNGLE GODS



BY

CARL VON HOFFMAN

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THE TRAGEDY OF TOMBYOU

From a drawing by the Baroness Katharina Dombrowski (K. O. S.)

JUNGLE GODS

BY

CARL VON HOFFMAN

EDITED BY EUGENE LÖHRKE

ILLUSTRATED BY
BARONESS KATHARINA DOMBROWSKI (K.O.S.)
AND WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER
WHOSE LIFE-LONG DEVOTION TO
NATURE STUDY IS MY INSPIRATION.

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A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Captain Carl Von Hoffman, the author of "Jungle Gods," was born in 1889 in Riga, in the Baltic Provinces of Russia, and was educated at the Military Academy of St. Petersburg. At the age of fourteen he ran away from the Academy to fight in the Russian-Japanese war. He was wounded, promoted, decorated for conspicuous gallantry and made a Knight of St. George.

At the end of the war, the call to adventure took him across the seas to America. He made a voyage, first, to Hull on one of his father's vessels, and the sight of the great Atlantic liners in the English ports, he tells us, was too much for him. He crossed the seas and began work in America on a newspaper. This was the day when the news photographer was coming more and more into prominence as a factor in the daily press, and he developed quickly into an expert cameraman. Cinema photography was the next step, and his ability in this field was recognized by missions to all parts of the world in the course of which he circumnavigated the globe many times.

In 1912, Captain Von Hoffman was authorized by the United States government to photograph our navy at maneuvers, and was responsible for the first complete motion picture record ever made of the Navy at work. Following this, he headed an expedition working in Mexico to photograph the revolutionary uprisings under Pancho Villa.

During the early years of the World War, we find him back again in Russia. In 1917, he returned to the United States, where he was commissioned as a first lieutenant in the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps. At the close of the war, in 1918, he crossed the Pacific again to fight in Siberia as a Captain under Admiral Kolchak in the White Russian Army.

His adventures in Africa begin with a trip to Morocco in the course of which he penetrated to the Atlas Mountains, studying and photographing the life and country of the Moors. His interest in Africa once roused, his passion for ethnological research led him back to the primitive continent time and time again. In 1925-26 he made his last trip, travelling the whole way from Cairo to the Cape through the heart of Equatorial Africa and Rhodesia, where the scenes of "Jungle Gods" are laid, lingering along the way for months to study the local native life with the insight and humorous appreciation for which he has a genius. It was during this trip that his two famous films, "Jungle Gods" and "Cairo to the Cape," which he has used as the basis for lectures throughout the country, were made.

INTRODUCTION

From its outer fringe of scrub and sapling to its sunless center, the jungle grows ever denser. The scattered trees crowd closer together with every increase in moisture beneath their roots. The sunlight loses its power; the air grows damp and cooler. And the shadows gradually deepen.

Here begins a sort of no-man's land, given over to beasts and to reptiles. Perhaps an elephant trail or two makes in toward the damp, leafy twilight; wide tracks marked by torn trees and branches where the elephants have reached up for the delicate upper leaves. And beyond this, the jungle night begins.

The leaves overhead, rank on rank, join and overlap like a roof of solid masonry. The air is dank, and the earth underfoot gives off an odor of rotting vegetation. Ferns rise to the height of trees; all growth has a twisted, tortured aspect; great creepers wind from tree to tree, matting the interstices with leafy screens; strange birds flash their wings in the rare intervals of sunlight and enormous blossoms fill the air with an exotic, heavy perfume. A terrible struggle for existence, for a place in the sun, goes on in the silence of the damp twilight until twilight gives place to the blackest night. The trees and plants seem to tear and choke each other, to thrust their leaves higher and ever higher, toward the life-giving sunlight. Around are vast open spaces but inward the plant life presses and

struggles as men in a city huddle and struggle, thrusting down the weak that the strong may grow and prosper.

And here in these dank, hidden temples that have known no sunlight since the swarming vegetable life began, in the menace of a night eternal, roam the Jungle Gods, the adverse spirits, vengeful and watchful enemies.

. . . . . .

Beyond the shadow of the jungle lies the great thirsty land, the veldt and bush, rock-strewn, abounding in thorny scrub and burned brown grass. Here the sun beats down like a scourge and the ant builds his hills as high as the native's hut. Some are like mounds baked in the glare of the sun, others stand out from the plain like the columns of a brown stone monument. And everywhere throughout the veldt roam the ants, the scavengers and destroyers.

Their life is one of continual destruction. The "white ants" or termites tunnel beneath the paths and roadways. No wall of wood or brick is stout enough to resist their invasions. They tunnel inside the trees, leaving only the outer shell or a desolate stump in the stark, brown desolation of the veldt. Their foragers hurry out day after day through the shallow tunnels, in columns many abreast, pressing out in all directions until they come in contact with their deadly enemies, the black or *safari* ants, insects sometimes an inch long with powerful mandibles whose grip never loosens even in death. The writhing struggling mass is flung to the surface of the ground by the very violence of

the conflict. And the broiling heat of the sun serves merely to animate the fierceness of the battle.

There are the red ants, carnivorous, destructive. They attack in columns, and their bite is like the burn of a red coal of fire. The unfortunate wanderer who stumbles across their columns or puts a foot through one of their tunnels is attacked instantly and with deadly effectiveness. They swarm up the legs and bite through the clothing. They get in the hair and cannot be dislodged. The pain of their poison lingers for hours. They live on meat and the carcasses of dead animals, and when a kill has been made by the natives, fires must be laid around the fresh meat to ward off the attack of these marauders.

Red, black or white, they are all equally active, all equally dangerous to the traveller. They alone of living things on the veldt seem able to sustain the fierce heat of the sun and the terrible absence of moisture.

. . . . . .

The traveller, across these regions, endures not only danger and discomfort from the insects beneath his feet—the ant, the scorpion spider, the spirilum tick—and of the overpowering sun heat, but from the many swarming insects of the air, driven mad, as it were, by thirst. As the beads of perspiration break out upon his brow, a hundred flying things dart toward him, struggling, fighting their way toward his lips and toward his eyes intent on every suggestion of moisture. The flies follow in noisy swarms, settling on his body wherever there is a moist spot, with a persistence that is maddening to tortured nerves. The tiny jiggers

work their way under the nails of his toes and lay their eggs, and the skin beneath the nails grows raw and festers.

Here and there on the knolls are trees, eaten away by the white ants as though a dry rot had attacked them, and the river banks are fringed by heavy growths of thorny scrub. Sometimes the streams flow high, level with the veldt; again they cut deep and their banks rise steeply like cliffs.

Along the edges of the streams, on the sand shoals or reed-grown marshes, lie the crocodiles in brown clusters, sunning themselves. The tick-birds walk through their open jaws, picking the remains of food from their teeth, busy scavengers who are never molested. Motionless in the sun, the crocodiles lie, apparently asleep or sunk in lethargy, ready to attack with the swiftness of the most deadly beast of the jungle. At the approach of an unwary intruder, the great tail whips out like a bent steel spring, and the jaws flash around to seize whatever the tail has struck. They dart through the grass into the water with the speed of some monstrous projectile shot from a cannon; enormous jaws close on their prey and crush the life out in a grip like a deadly vise.

Further along, where the water is deeper and the brown current runs sluggishly, hippopotami are at play, their bodies sunk below the water with only the eyes and nose visible on the surface. Vast and clumsy as elephants they shake off their torpor and sport and play in the water like dolphins, rising to the surface, plunging and somersaulting with a grace that seems

incredible in such vast creatures. Above them, on the branch of a dead tree, the fish eagle sits at his sentry duty, watching the waters below for his favorite prey, the tiny minnow.

Through the marsh grass moves the crane, poised and graceful, its alert eyes searching every pool for the smaller fish; ready to take instant wing on the approach of danger. For here, by the river, as in the veldt and the jungle, every living creature is a hunter. Life is preying on life; the ugly on the beautiful, the strong on the weak.

Wherever there is relief from the sun, in the shade of trees and bushes lurks the deadly menace to men and animals, the tse-tse flies. They hover in the belt of shadow, close to the water but do not venture far in the heat of the sunshine, for they need constant moisture to sustain them.

Over the higher plains in the dry season, when the bent grass is scorched by the sun to a brown clay color, a dense pall of smoke hangs. The flames of these frequent bush fires rush forward at an appalling pace and with the sound of thunder. Above the rolling clouds of smoke, the vulture wheels, ready to dart upon the insects and small animals of the veldt which the flames drive before them.

Wherever the traveller moves is this constant danger of beasts and of insects and fierce burning sun rays. And wherever he looks, the veldt rolls off around him, miles on miles of low hills, of bush, of rock and thorn. While the wild life of the day is on the alert everywhere, the great beasts of the night lie

in their lairs awaiting the time when the sun shall set and the moon rise over the vast scene of their nocturnal prowling.

. . . . . .

If by day his path through the veldt is beset with hidden small dangers and discomforts, at night the traveller feels the greater and more powerful menace of the unknown, the shadowy, the imagined.

As the sun goes down, a mist of color spreads through the sky. In the east, the blue fades swiftly into green and scarlet, while patches of diffused color, high in the arch of the heavens, hang over the flaming descent of the sun. The rays shoot up vertically, changing color in rapid succession and the undulations of the veldt merge their brown with the purple of night. The day fades abruptly as though an unseen hand had turned off the sunlight. The fall of darkness is swift and dramatic.

And now the whole of the land belongs to the nocturnal beasts whose sun is the moon and whose safety is shadow. The veldt is silent save for the screech and hoot of the owls, the bark of the jackal and the laugh of the hyena. The fires are lit in the villages before the huts of mud and thatch, and the cattle are corralled in the safety of enclosures built of tall saplings. And everywhere the veldt with its shapes and shadows takes on the dark glamour of mystery.

The belated wanderer moves cautiously with some dormant hidden instinct alive and awake to the threat of the vast, moonlit unknown around him. Every shadow is formidable with its hint of danger. A tree

SUNSET IN THE IRUMI MOUNTAINS

stump becomes a crouching leopard, and the fireflies glow like eyes, watching and waiting from ambush. His finger feels for the trigger of his gun. The great moon rises higher and its silver light brings out the shapes of the desolation around him in half tones. The wind stirs the branches of a tall tree beside the trail. A serpent writhes across the path and the wanderer stops, conscious of his heart beat. Once more his finger moves toward the trigger of his gun, but what he saw was merely the root of a tree and, reassured, he presses on again. His eyes grow tired from watching and staring into the shadows. The fear of the veldt is creeping and insidious. He calls a halt and his porters bring in dry grass and light it. What a relief! But only for a moment. The fire dies down and the shadows that have moved off to crouch along the edge of the glow jump in again and the darkness seems more intense than ever. He longs for the safety of the village, the sound of human voices, the protection of other men and the warmth of hut fires. And again the journey begins through the darkness.

Suddenly the silence of the veldt is broken by a mighty overtone that rolls and vibrates in a great, moving wave of sound. It is the lion's roar, once heard never to be forgotten. And again terror lays a cold hand on the wanderer. He knows that the lion never attacks a man except when wounded or old. He knows that the full-throated roar means the great beast has feasted, is content, and is giving praise to a world of plenty. But he has ceased to be an intelligent

being guided by knowledge and reflection. He is engulfed in the darkness of the veldt, and the veldt has awakened his own darker instincts. He is a creature at one with the life around him, instinct with fear and superstition, liable to sudden panics that he can only choke down by the full exertion of his will power.

Through the darkness the native porters move surely. To them, unlike the white man, shadows are but shadows. Their eyes, trained to the darkness of the veldt, make fewer mistakes. They know that the meat they carry, if they have been on a hunt, will attract the beasts, but the white man has guns and will protect them. Only one fear is paramount, and that is of the malicious spirits who roam the bush and jungle, and these they know may even now be lurking in the shadows beside the trail. The lion, whose roar has sounded so close, might be a reincarnated chief, with an animal's strength and a more than human cunning, for all dead chiefs return in the bodies of lions. If the native speaks to his comrades at all, it is in words that are cautious, and calculated to throw the spirits off their guard. But the white man's fear of the dark itself, his confused imagination and erring vision, he is free of.

The journey proceeds and the black guides follow the twisting, intersecting trails as though guided by knowledge as precise and unerring as that which guides homing birds in the darkness. Their bare feet seem to know the feel of the ground. Here, they turn to the right, now to the left, pressing forward without hesitation. And suddenly far-off, like the beat of

some monstrous heart, the sound of a drum vibrates through the darkness. . . . The weird, monotonous rhythm comes closer, and the natives start forward more rapidly. Journey's end at last! The round, red eyes of the hut fires prick and blink through the gloom. It is the village, and now the huts appear, a cluster of shadow-shapes huddled close together as though for mutual protection. To the measured beating of the drum, arresting and weird in the stillness, is added the clapping of hands, the shuffling of feet, a babble and medley of voices. . . . And already the white man's porters have dropped their loads, forgetting the weary miles of the veldt, to become part of the moving and swaying of human shadows—the dance going on in the circle of red firelight.

. . . . . .

Scattered through the veldt, sometimes miles apart, sometimes close together, are these villages, clusters of mud huts with conical thatched roofs, surrounded on the outskirts by cultivated lands and gardens. And from village to village run the trails, narrow paths, washed out by rain and beaten by the feet of the natives who walk them in single file, until they are as hard as city pavements.

The walls of the huts are built of sun-baked clay, and the thatch overlaps to keep the interiors cool. At the eaves, the thatch is supported by poles, so that every hut has a sort of shaded verandah around it. Each hut has a hole to serve as a door, and no other opening, and before this hole is hung a wicker screen to form a barrier against marauding beasts. When a

fire is built inside, the smoke is allowed to rise and sift through the thatch.

The gardens on the outskirts of the village are small, for the native cultivates no more than he needs for himself and his family. The villages are clean as a rule, and orderly, and the spaces of trodden red clay between the huts are kept free from refuse and pollution. . . .

Beyond the fringes of the village, along the trail that leads to the veldt, where wandering spirits will be sure to find them, stand the little native shrines—the *m'pashi*. They are tiny rest houses for the spirits, miniatures of the larger native huts. If the *m'pashi* is built for the spirit of a chief, a little lion made of straw is fastened to the roof, and on the roofs of others antelope horns are laid with their prongs pointing toward the veldt, to ward off evil and malicious spirits. Inside these shrines are small mounds of mealie-flour, a few matches, a handful of tobacco, perhaps a piece of meat or a banana, for the friendly spirits need refreshment as well as rest after their long wanderings, and to find an *m'pashi* empty and without food would anger them and drive them to vengeance.

The native times his day by the sun, and the lapse of days by the rising and waning of the moon or the coming and going of the seasons. With the sun he rises, and with the fall of night he seeks repose. One day is much like another to him, and one hour like the next. He knows that when he is hungry it is time to eat and when he is tired it is time to sleep, and for the

rest he prefers idleness to labor. When he rises in the morning he eats the food which his wife has prepared for him. If he has labor in the field, he idles first awhile with the other men of the village and then strolls to it at his leisure. Once there he does not waste any more time in his ploughing than is strictly necessary. If he has promised to assist someone else, or if he has been pressed into service by the white man, he will appear on the scene if he is reminded of it. Otherwise he will forget about it.

Thus the life of a native village presents to the industrious white man a curious spectacle; a spectacle of contentment and placid indolence without either the grossness of sloth or the bustle that his own cities have accustomed him to.

. . . . . .

In our state of mind which we choose to call advanced and enlightened, it is almost impossible for us to imagine the native's fear of witchcraft and black magic. Death, it is true, holds less terror for him than for us, for his belief in an existence after death is absolute and unquestioning. Yet it may be said of him more truly than of us that "in the midst of life he is in death," for from the cradle to the grave the spirits of the departed are always around him, watching his every motion and gesture, listening to every accent of his voice. And the malignant and adverse spirits, the spirits of the dead who, during their lifetime he may have wronged, are continually on the alert to do him a mischief or injury.

Your casual explorer, trader, hunter, may live in

the midst of this year after year, literally surrounded, engulfed in the shadow of superstition and still observe exactly nothing. For it is impossible for him to realize that every gesture of a lifetime has a particular significance and importance. What he does see is largely what the native wants him to see, and this is either nothing at all, or directly misleading.

Let us say, for example, that you have come upon a village in the midst of the veldt. It is mid-morning, and tranquillity reigns, broken by the usual unhurried labors of existence. Here, at one hut door, a young man is seated slowly smoking his calabash. Across from him another is pounding out cloth from the bark of the *musamba* tree. At the fringe of the village, the native smiths are at work over a charcoal fire, with a crude forge and bellows, pounding the iron into shape for instruments of the field, the chase and of warfare.

All this presents to the eye of the casual visitor simply a commonplace of savage life. But let us say that we are unwilling to accept commonplaces and choose to glance a little deeper. We will notice certain things, small to be sure, but nevertheless significant. Why is it that the blacksmith's work, in every village through which we have wandered, is conducted at the very edge? Because here the smith is isolated from the gaze of women, who might glance at his fire during their menstrual periods, and take the sharp edge from spear and axe. Or take your young man yonder, smoking his pipe at the hut door, a perfect reflection of the hot mid-morning indolence, a piece of the village

scenery as unobtrusive and insignificant as a bush in the jungle. Only by extended inquiry you might ascertain that he is the father of a new-born child which has not yet smiled. He must sit there, never rising to his feet, for if the father of a new-born child were to stub his toe while walking before that child has smiled, the child would begin his life under a bad omen. Or the man pounding the bark-cloth—surely that is a matter-of-fact enough spectacle. But his industry is a little too active, perhaps, for the hot morning, and any too active industry on the part of a native is revealing. Well, he has violated his neighbor's wife. He has broken a right of private possession. He has offended a tribal *tabu* sanctified by ages of usage. His life is at stake, and his relatives are liable for damages. He is working off his crime in bark cloth. . . . And so on to the end of the indolent and peaceful village.

Our vaunted progress and inventiveness and the inferiority of the blackman in such matters depends on more factors than those of race and climate. Why has the native never built cities and hewn out monuments comparable to our own? Is he lazy? Not necessarily. It is more accurate to say that he is unoccupied. And his inventive powers have been discouraged by lack of adequate incentive. Life is easy for him and nature is bountiful. His rude hut is quite adequate to his needs, and to improve in any way on the existing architectural arrangements might prove dangerous. For if he built too handsome a hut, his chief might take a fancy to it. In that case mere

prudence would dictate that his eyes be put out or his hands chopped off so that he could not annoy the chief by building another for someone else just like it.

. . . . . .

When the native greets you and murmurs his own equivalent of our "how-do-you-do," he means only one thing, "Have you eaten?" If you have, it is assumed that all is well with you, and your appropriate response is, "I am stuffed quite full—" or "I am tied up tight."

As in the case of the Arab, the left hand is known as the eating hand. For the right hand is reserved all uncleanly work, and this rulé is fixed and unalterably followed in many parts of Africa.

. . . . . .

The scene of *Jungle Gods* is that wild region of mountains and plains and foothills south of the Congo State, in North-Eastern Rhodesia, in a region roughly defined by the southern shore of Lake Tanganyika, with Lake Mweru as its western border and Lake Nyassa to the east. Here, in the Irumi Mountains, dwells a people scattered through many villages of grass-thatched *shambas,* along the river banks, on the plateaus or in the valleys. It is with this tribe, the Lalas, a people once formidable in war, but broken up since the white man's invasion and the running through of boundaries, that *Jungle Gods* deals.

I

WISDOM OF CHIWAHLI

WISDOM OF CHIWAHLI

To the white man, the old King, Chiwahli, showed a hospitality and courtesy that was as much a mark of the native dignity of his character as of the curiosity which visitors usually aroused in him. As he sat in the great courtyard before his hut in the royal village, surrounded by his counsellors, his sons, grandsons and great grandsons, princes of the blood, lolling on the ground around him in familiar yet respectful attitudes, touching his mat, he would raise his head at the sound of our approaching footsteps, and his old voice would ring out, warm, deliberate and sincere.

"I have raised my eyes to the hills—yes—I have looked down the path to the valley—yes—saying to myself, yes, they will come, the white men, and now, yes, now this day the sun shines and they are come —yes, they are come. Fetch out tobacco for them—yes—and beer and food for all their people—much food from all the countryside— Fetch in firewood from the bush, for it is cold, and water—yes—much water from the river for they have walked over stony ways and are tired—yes—"

And here he would draw on his pipe again, or take a pinch of snuff and relapse into silence.

. . . . . .

He was a stalwart, big, wrinkled old man, and he had once ruled over a princely territory, over a people scattered through at least a hundred villages.

Here his word was law and his slightest wish a commandment. His rule was just and hard, and he knew no favorites. But now his people were divided. The white men had run their own boundaries through his domains, splitting them in half. He was still a powerful king, but the great past, when he had ruled independent of any outside interference over all his territory lived on in him as an old man's dream.

The first time I saw him, he wore the dress coat of a German army officer which had been taken from a dead body when the German and British were fighting for control in the Nyassa district. He had come out from the royal village to meet our *safari,* surrounded by his retinue of relatives and retainers, and it was as much the dignity of his carriage and deportment as his uniform regalia that marked him out. They stopped behind him in a group, while he stepped out toward us, clapping his hands together in the customary Lala greeting.

His first words to me were in the nature of a request. One of the brass buttons on his formal dress coat was missing. He wanted to know whether I had any of those shiny brass buttons to replace the one he had lost . . .

My visit in the village of Chiwahli was lengthy and our intercourse was always free. He would appear in the white man's compound, where my tent was pitched, at odd hours of the day, accompanied by a handful of attendants, one of them always carrying his royal bench of state. He often watched me eating, although since the white man's food was unpalatable

to him he always courteously refused my invitations to partake with me.

He always looked for occasions to talk with the white man, nevertheless. It gave him a sort of prestige in the eyes of his followers, for they still regarded the white man's ways and doings as miraculous. They would pause as they passed the clearing outside the village where the white man pitched his tents to watch old Chiwahli, sitting on a bench, holding forth to these Lords of their earthly destiny. And they would shake their heads. "He must be wise, that old Chiwahli," they would say. "He must be very wise, for look, he is speaking and the white man is listening. He must be speaking words of wisdom."

. . . . . .

I was sitting at my midday meal before my tent one day when Chiwahli came into the enclosure. From his approach, which was slow, and his manner, which was reserved, I gathered that he intended a visit of courtesy. After the usual formal greetings, he sat down beside the table and examined the knives, forks and spoons with shrewd interest. This was the white man's way of doing things—this curious elaboration of ceremony over the simple act of eating. He had observed the white man at meals before, but had never delivered himself of an opinion on the subject. But with me, he was usually outspoken. We had held conversations before on the profounder matters of life and death. He had many curious mental reservations in matters that the white man took for granted. And his thought processes were never want-

ing in a logic that was astounding in mere point of its simplicity. Now he spoke on the subject of eating:

"Here you sit at your meal and eat," he said. "And you mix the very high things of life with death." His gesture, which was slightly scornful, included all of the implements on my table, and the deep-set eyes above his sunken cheeks regarded me somberly. I said:

"I am eating my lunch. I don't see how death comes into it."

"Isn't food life?" he asked.

There was no questioning this. He went on, pointing at my knives and forks.

"And yet you cut your food, which is life, with a sharp-pointed instrument of death and raise it to your mouth on a little spear."

I dropped my knife and fork slowly. This was an interesting beginning.

"You use knives," I said.

"We use the instruments of death to kill our meat. We cut our meat, when it is killed, with knives. But we do not use instruments of death to feed our life. You white men are always mixing things: the things of death and the things of life. Even to your feasts you bring your spears."

. . . . . .

It was, of course, difficult to ascertain Chiwahli's age, since the native memory in these matters is invariably uncertain. The only way we could arrive at an approximation of it was by tracing back the white men he remembered having seen in his territory. We

guessed that he was from 90 to 98 years old, but he appeared to be in complete enjoyment of his health and faculties. His memories of certain incidents from the past were singularly clear.

He talked to us, often, as a battle-scarred war veteran will rehearse his memories before a youthful audience, his mind dwelling on "the old days" and surrounding them with a romantic glamour. He called us "young saplings," shaking his head at us. Oh, we thought we knew a lot, we white men, but after all what *did* we know, what had we seen and experienced that was important? Important, that is compared to the strength, variety and splendor of his own young years.

Ah, it was not like today, those days of the past before the white man had come to the country with his rules and laws and restrictions. Then, in those days, a man was a man and there was no higher authority to support fools and imbeciles in power. He himself, how had he managed to maintain his ascendancy all through the years? Did we suppose it was a trick, a form of magic? He shook his head. A man had to be a man, that was all.

And he would regale us with tales of his valor in the chase and in battle. He had been cunning, oh, yes, very cunning as well as very strong. It was not for nothing they had called him Chiwahli the Wise, for he had proved to them time and time again that his eyes saw further, his ears heard more, his bow and arrows struck further. Look at the way he had won their admiration during those mighty elephant

hunts of the old days, before the white man with his guns had decimated the herds and driven them out of the country. He would halt his spearmen in the tall grass, and then go on ahead, as he told them, to reconnoiter. He would weave his way along the ground, invisible and quiet as a snake, until he came to some big bull that had strayed away from the rest of the herd, and he would tie a knot in the hair of the bull's tail as the great animal was quietly grazing. Then he would worm his way back through the grass again and gather his men together. He would point out the lone bull, grazing quietly two hundred paces away. "Come," he would say, "let us kill the beast with a knot in the hair of its tail." And they would look at him in wonder. How could he see a knot in the tail-tuft of an elephant at such a great distance? And not until they had killed the bull, and examined him would they believe in the great and supernatural power of Chiwahli's eyesight.

As late as 1900 there had been a battle between Chiwahli's branch of the royal family and some rival kinsmen from over the hills, and Chiwahli had triumphed splendidly, causing the rout of his enemies from the Mukokwe hills where they had fortified themselves. And he told us how Chimwasoni, a young Prince of the Molongwe branch, who had helped him in this war, had come to take refuge with him in his royal village. Chimwasoni had killed two witches, his wife and his mother-in-law, and was a refugee from the white man's justice. But because he came from another totem, Chiwahli had considered that the white

man's authority superseded his own and had turned him over to the soldiers.

. . . . . .

His voice when he spoke of the old days was slow and impressive. He drew analogies that were rich and apt, and his idiom was perfect. He had been an orator in the old days, he told us once. "But now only the old men and the councillors understood his way of talking." Even language was not what it had been, and he would shake his head.

He told us once how he had driven the marauding Angonis back from the hills from which they were raiding the Lala territory and scattered them to the four winds. He had done it, he said, with only a score or so of warriors, the most expert and trusty in his band, all of them blood-brothers. They had chosen a place in ambush near the only water hole in the vicinity of the Angoni camp, and there, lying in concealment by day, they had awaited the night when their enemies came down to fetch water. Time and time they were driven out, but always they crept back to their concealment, until finally the Angonis had the choice of perishing from thirst or of seeing their warrior band dissolving under their eyes from the poisoned arrows of Chiwahli's bowmen. So they had fled.

. . . . . .

He was proud of his people, men and women alike. If there were no warriors and huntsmen quite as skillful as the Lalas, neither were there any women like the Chiwahli women to stand firmly behind them in the hour of need. He told how on one occasion when

his village was forced to flee before a strong raiding party from the north, he had satisfied himself once and for all as to the spirit of Chiwahli women. For he had been in command of the rear guard, he said, and passing along the trail with his spearmen where the women and the old people had already gone before him, he was arrested by the cry of a child in the bushes. He stopped and looked at the child. There was no time to pick it up, nor could he have spared a spearman to carry it. But that night, when they had been reinforced by warriors from the aroused villages to the north and could make a front against the enemy, he had spoken to the mother of the infant and asked her why she had deserted it. And she had explained to him that the child impeded her flight and that, being sick, she was unable to struggle further with her burden. But she was young, she said, and knew that she would recover. She knew that she would live to bear many children for the one she had abandoned, and was this not loyalty, he asked, to her tribe? Was it not better to sacrifice one life than to sacrifice several? It had been hard for her to abandon that infant.

. . . . . .

He came up to my tent one day while I was shaving, and as usual the strange and curious manifestations of the white man's ingenuity attracted his notice. He watched me scraping my face with the bright, shiny blade and gazing into the shiny mirror. I finished, and removing the glass from its hook held it in front of him and told him to look into it. He gazed

at his own reflection for a long time, then his chest began heaving and soon he was shaking with laughter. I asked him what he saw. He laughed again and then frowned, for he disliked showing any ignorance in the face of the white man's known cleverness, and here was a trick of the white man he had never seen before. He glanced cautiously over his shoulder and back into the mirror again, and finally said:

"Where is this baboon?"

He had lived ninety-odd years without seeing his face in a mirror. What reflections of it he had seen had been dim and shadowy ones mirrored back to him from pools of water, and now he saw it with all its furrows and wrinkles, and he had mistaken his reflection in my mirror for the face of a baboon. It was part of the white man's cleverness, he thought, thus to conjure up a baboon out of thin air and to cause it to vanish whenever he turned his head and gazed over his shoulder.

I had considerable difficulty in convincing Chiwahli that the image he saw was his own and not that of a baboon, for as he put it, he knew all the faces of all his people, and here was one he had never seen before, therefore it could not exist. So I called to one of his sons who was standing behind him watching the proceedings, told him to hold the mirror in front of *his* face, and then asked Chiwahli to gaze into it and tell me what he saw. He replied with considerable astonishment that he saw the face of his son. I held it in front of my own face and told him to look at it, and then I passed the mirror slowly back in front of his

face again. I asked him again what he saw. He replied without the slightest hesitation:

"A baboon."

It was a long time before I succeeded in convincing him that there was no baboon in the neighborhood and that what he was seeing was his own countenance. He asked if I would give him the mirror, and I did. He departed laughing and chuckling, pleased as a small child with a new toy. A few days later he sent his son to me to ask for another one like it. His son repeated his father's words as follows:

"Bwana," * he said, "do you remember standing here and scraping your face in front of the thing that when you look into it makes you look like a baboon? I sat for many hours and days looking into it, and I laughed until my women asked me why I was laughing, for I have had all these years the face of a baboon and I never knew it. Yesterday as I was sitting for hours, laughing to see how I resembled a baboon, someone bewitched me. For as it grew dark, I became drowsy and dropped the thing. The little thing fell on a stone. It said 'click' and died.

"I could see the baboon no more . . ."

. . . . . .

One day I brought Johnny Boy, my chimpanzee, in to Chiwahli's courtyard for his inspection. The old king sat with his eyes gloomily fixed on the ground. He had been called to adjudge a family dispute that same morning and the case had been a trying one, calling for the exercise of considerable wisdom and

* *Bwana*—master.

discretion. It was the case of one of his followers, Rabbit, and his young wife.

Rabbit, who had won his name early in life on account of the length of his ears, worked in the white man's mine thirty miles from the village. He was old, and felt his years. His wife was young, and felt her years also. When he came home on a visit he found that she had brought a child into the world. Obviously it wasn't his child. Five years ago, he might have claimed it. But now he could only shake his head sadly at the duplicity and treachery of women. And the more he shook his head, the more angry his young wife grew. She insisted that it was his child.

Rabbit shook his head again.

No. She had deceived him. They went to Chiwahli. Chiwahli looked at her and then looked at her husband, and then at the child. The woman spoke:

"He says that I have betrayed him. And I am a good woman and a faithful wife."

The husband said:

"I am an old man. How could I father a child?"

She said:

"Ah, but you do not remember that night, many moons ago, when you had feasted and drunk of the banana beer? You are an old man now, but you were a young man then, for you are always young when the beer is inside you."

He shook his head slowly, in the way that irritated her.

"Ah," he said. "Let the chief, let Chiwahli speak."

And Chiwahli spoke slowly.

"Your name is Rabbit. And why is your name Rabbit? Was it not given to you when you were still young because you had long ears? And now that you are old your ears are still long. Look at your child. Are his ears not as long as a rabbit's? How then could he be other than the son of Rabbit when he has Rabbit's ears?"

The ears of the child were no longer than the ears of any child in the village, but Chiwahli's voice was stern and his words were convincing. If Chiwahli believed that the child's ears were long, they must be long, and Rabbit shook his head and sighed. It must be so, then. The child was his after all, and he felt a kind of mournful pleasure in the prospect of his perennial virility. He shuffled off, content, and his wife smiled slowly and softly down on Chiwahli.

The old chief looked up at her and scowled. . . .

Thus had Chiwahli sat in judgment over human frailties that morning when I brought Johnny Boy to his hut for his inspection. He had seen many kinds of monkeys before, but never a chimpanzee, and for a while the old chief studied him, somberly shaking his head from time to time. His black eyes, void of expression as sunless forest pools, deep sunk above the waste of his leathery old cheeks, sought out my face from time to time and then returned to the face of the chimpanzee. He spoke finally, weighing his words deliberately:

"You are a clever man," he said, "for I have watched you, and you are very clever. But he is more

than clever, for he is wise. He is the wisest of all of us."

This was another interesting beginning. I assumed an injured air at once. I said:

"How is he wiser, for example, than I?"

His eyes consulted my face.

"You are not wise, you white men; you are clever, very clever, but such big fools. You have firesticks and wagons that run by medicine. You are smart, that is all. Even we are wiser than you are."

I asked:

"How are you wiser than we are?"

"Do we not eat enough and sleep enough? Do you eat more or sleep more than we do? If you have nothing to do, do you not do something just the same? You kill meat whether you have enough meat to eat or not. You go with your *safaris* from one place to another, as if you were looking for something you could never find." Chiwahli shook his old head slowly, and his eyes that were like dark pits in his black face, stared into mine. "You are smart, but we are wiser than you are."

I nodded slowly, encouragingly.

"But why do you say the chimpanzee is the wisest of all?"

Chiwahli's face wrinkled about the corners of his mouth. His hand rose.

"Do you feed him?"

"Of course," I said.

"Does he have to work for his food or do you bring

it to him? Does he have to walk in the hot sun or is he carried in a box?" He shook his head again, slowly. "We are wiser than you are, but you make us work for you. And you have to work for him. Is he not wise?"

"But don't you see," I said, "he can't talk."

Chiwahli looked at me triumphantly.

"Ah, he is wise," he said. "For if he would talk you would give him a load to carry."

. . . . . .

Chiwahli's discussions of the tribal customs always revealed the wisdom of the naturalistic philosopher, who reasons from nature to man and never vice versa: Thus when asked why it was the woman's task to reap and harvest while the men's work was limited to sewing and ploughing, to cutting down the trees and burning them for fertilizer, he observed:

"Harvesting is not work for a man. Everything in our lives is shaped according to laws. What is a man? He is the sower of seed, the planter of life and food. He can rape women and the soil. But can he grow children? No, he cannot. The earth is a woman. She can produce. The soil and women are alike. Both are bearers of life. Men can sow, but women must gather the harvest. They nurse their children with the milk of their breasts. So they must grind the corn to nurse their men . . ."

THE FIRE-STICK

Certain things are forbidden in the Lala territory, but here as elsewhere, the prohibition is largely an incentive to bootlegging. Among the forbidden things are firearms and whiskey. A good many guns, however, are smuggled across the Congo border by dishonest traders. These are mostly muzzle-loaders, crazy contrivances, as dangerous to the person who fires them as to anything he is likely to hit. But they are highly prized as evidences of a superior power inherent in the possessor; a power to make a noise and sometimes to kill at a distance and the native will carry an old muzzle-loader merely for the pride of possession.

Chimbakuma of the village of Chiwefwe owned a firestick. It was an ancient muzzle-loader with a rusty barrel, but it worked and he was proud of it. He was also proud of his other possessions, among them his wives. They were many and youthful, but they were not always respectful. They made fun of Chimbakuma's shrivelled body and hawk-like face. They told him that he had shrivelled up from eating too much mealie. They were women of sound appetite. They wanted meat, they needed meat.

When women want a thing, they usually get it. A man may run away. In that event, the woman's want is like a lasso. It waits until he thinks he is safe and then it drops around his neck. Or he may try to dodge,

evade and argue and be logical about it. In that case he is a fool for he merely argues with himself. Chimbakuma might point out the superior virtues of mealies to red meat until his breath ran short. But the only result was that he started out on the hunt, for meat, out of breath. And so he toiled up and down the little hills of the veldt, across the rock and the scrub, until he came upon a beautiful hartebeeste.

Chimbakuma walked forward cautiously until he was within firing range. Up went his gun to his shoulder. There was a small, flat explosion in the wilderness, the hartebeeste looked startled for a moment and then took to its heels. The crazy gun had fooled him. And Chimbakuma started off in hot pursuit.

All day long under the scorching sun, he followed the trail of the hartebeeste. The afternoon faded, and the sun, a ball of red, began to sink behind the little hills to the west, dropping toward the land of shadows and of darkness from which no man ever returns, the land toward which, in the old days, the slaves were led in chains never to come back to the east and happiness again. But Chimbakuma never saw the hartebeeste. He was growing hungry, and his mouth watered for the meat his wives had anticipated. His followers on the hunt were angry, disappointed and quarrelsome. When twilight had dropped its first mantle of purple shadow over the veldt, he turned back from the hunt and made for the village.

Chimbakuma entered the village quietly. He felt cheated, dejected. What his wives would tell him, he

had already anticipated. There is only one way, he knew, to prevent a bitter woman from talking too much, and that is to talk more and faster. So he stole up to his hut, leaned his gun against the wall and began in a loud querulous voice to scold it. His wives gathered around him and started to talk, but Chimbakuma only talked the louder. He gesticulated, raising his arms and shaking his fists.

"You bad firestick, it is you who have gotten me into all this trouble. For you I left my good bow and arrow which never fail. My mouth and stomach was prepared for the meat. The mouths and stomachs of my men were hungry. The stomachs of my wives were waiting. And you, contemptible firestick, you refused to kill."

He talked louder and began to gesticulate, and his wives hung back, appalled.

He might have kept on until his wives had forgotten what they were going to scold him about, but Chimbakuma at last worked himself into a genuine frenzy and gave the firestick a violent kick. The firestick went off and shot a piece of his hip away.

That night Chimbakuma came limping to the white man's tent. He begged for medicine. The firestick had bitten him in the hip because he had scolded it for not killing meat. He said that he was through forever with firesticks.

DEATH OF THE SON OF TOMBYOU

It was Chiwahli who told me the story of Tombyou and her son.

He was proud of the women of his tribe, and he meant it to illustrate a point: that despite the cleverness and tricks and laws of the white man, there were other laws and loyalties that superseded them.

In native Rhodesia, where there is infinite time for everything, where to hurry from one place to another is merely to miss something along the way, tales are as long as the teller's wind and the listener's patience. And if I have chosen to tell the story of Tombyou and her son in my own words rather than Chiwahli's, it is out of deference to the western desire to get done with things. But it is not to slight Chiwahli's eloquence and his feeling for the little dramas of existence.

. . . . . .

The thorny bushes that screen the precipitous banks of the Lusenfwa River, render it inaccessible to the traveller except at one point, near the village of Mukuluwe, on the confines of Chiwahli's kingdom. Here a path leads through the high grass and the swamps to a gully from which the spring torrents have swept away the undergrowth, and made an even descent to the river bottom.

By day the path holds the footprints of people who come from the village to fill their water jars at the river. At night, when the village is asleep, the path

THREE JUNGLE GODS AND AN AFRICAN "PIANO"

belongs to the beasts who creep down to the water's edge to quench their thirst. At dawn they vanish, leaving their spoor in the mud and sand.

Just below the gully a great tree felled across the stream makes a rude bridge from one precipitous bank to the other. From the river to the village it is a walk of half a mile by the path. It is still further from the river to the long adobe mission which stands beneath tall trees on a hill, in a small cluster of outbuildings, surrounded with gardens.

. . . . . .

When Tombyou left the village to live at the mission she was given a cross to wear like a charm suspended around her neck. She was taught to say the white man's prayers in her own language. She was then hardly more than a child. The prayers did not interest her much, for she had her own religion. But Tombyou was a useful, likeable girl and the missionary and his wife decided that they could trust her to look after their small child.

Tombyou had seen white people before and knew some things about them. People had told her that they were half-baked; that their skins were only half done and had never taken on the dark color that was natural. But she had never seen hair like the hair of this white child. It shone in the sunlight as though it were hot like a flame of fire. It shone like the strange metal that in olden times her people had been forbidden to pick up—the metal that glistened from tiny pebbles in the river beds. And his skin was white and soft. But after a while the feeling of strangeness

left her and she began to notice other things about the white child.

If someone had told her that the white mother loved her infant she would not have known what the expression meant. In her village mothers did not love their children. They bore them, and they carried them on their backs proudly for it was good form to carry a child on your back. If they had no child of their own to carry they borrowed one from a neighbor who had two or more. They suckled them walking down the river path for water. They bent over to hoe their corn with the sleeping children on their backs, the tiny heads swinging from side to side. And when the child could crawl the mother stopped carrying it. When it could walk it began looking after itself. If it was a girl it stayed on with the mother, if it was a boy it went to live with the young men in their hut. And so it grew to maturity.

But with the white woman, the care of her infant was only the beginning. What went on between the mother and child frightened Tombyou at first. The mother bent over and touched the child with her lips and held her lips to his face or caressed his hair. She had never seen a kiss before. Was the mother trying to devour her child? She had heard stories about tribes across the mountains in the Congo who ate each other's flesh. But the child smiled and seemed happy. When she saw the mother kiss the child, her own lips felt stiff and badly formed. But she was conscious of something she had not been conscious of before—a feeling in them. And when she touched the child's

face with them, one day when no one was looking, that feeling seemed to penetrate and flow, to gather force deep within her.

Soon she did not even have to touch the child with her lips but only to look at him. She would hold the child to her breast and bend over him, crooning and rocking him in her arms as no black mother in her village had ever done. She knew that the feeling within her was not right. If she told anyone in the village about it they would think she was bewitched, *m'wfuti.** But the feeling grew within her and she loved the child of the white woman.

She lived in the mission for three years longer. She was a grown woman then, so returned to her village and was married.

. . . . . .

When Tombyou was about to have a baby the only ones excited about it were the midwives, and they chattered together as they went along the path that led through the high grass to the river while they fetched many calabashes filled with water for Tombyou's hut.

The baby came and it was a man-child. This was good although Tombyou's mother would have preferred a girl who could be sold into marriage later to enrich the family. In a few days it was bathed and rubbed with medicine. Then it smiled. Not until that time was the father allowed to touch it or to walk about for fear he might stumble and bring the curse of a spirit on the baby. Tombyou brought the child out of her hut and carried it around the village as all

* *M'wfuti,* bewitched.

new-born children are carried. The women came and gave her beads and the men brought out their spears and planted them in the ground before their huts where the infant could see them.

And the baby was taken to the witch-doctor, Chituka. It was his duty to ascertain which of the departed spirits of the child's ancestors was reincarnated by this birth and the whole village assembled to witness the ceremony.

Chituka brought out all his sticks and calabashes and the other implements of his profession and recited the proper incantations over them. Thus the spirits were summoned. Then he gave Tombyou's baby a small stick to hold. All the people, crowding around, began to shout out the names of departed relatives on both the mother's and father's side. They repeated each name three times and then chanted another. Chituka watched Tombyou's baby closely, for while the name of a spirit is being called if the child cries out or drops the stick that is a positive sign that that spirit has taken up his abode in the infant's body.

So Chituka found out whose spirit had come to flesh again in Tombyou's baby. The child received its name, the *Son-of-Tombyou.* Tombyou lost hers and became the *Mother-of-Kosamu.*

. . . . . .

It would have been less a tragedy and more in the scheme of things—these happenings of the next six months—if Tombyou had not worked in the mission and learned the meaning of love. This set her apart. She was no longer a black mother but a black woman

TOMBYOU

THE WITCH-QUEEN, CHISENGA

A NATIVE TEACHER AND HIS PUPIL

with a white mother's feeling. This accounted for my interest in her and the child.

Six months after Chituka's ceremonies, I crossed the Lusenfwa River by the rude bridge and followed the path to the village. Tombyou was before her hut, her child on her back, grinding corn. She paused in her work and looked up when I spoke to her and her child began crying fretfully, his little black head rolling from side to side. I asked about his welfare. He was cutting his upper teeth first. She said, "He is growing *m'wfuti.* He will turn into a snake."

Chituka, the witch-doctor, I knew, had been the final authority for that. Children who cut their upper teeth before their lower always turned into snakes. There was only one thing to do—drown them. I told her that the people from the *Boma* * would arrest her and hang her if she killed her child. She stared at me, frightened and uncomprehending. She said:

"Why should they try to kill me? Am I not saving the lives of my people?"

For children who turn into snakes return to the village and bite their parents. So they must be drowned.

And so I began to watch Tombyou closely. She had learned the feeling called love. She was nursing and petting her black child as she had learned to caress the child at the mission. Yet no person had ever disobeyed the laws of Chituka. If I had said, "The child will not turn into a snake," she would have stared at me in wonder. For all children who cut their upper

* *Boma*—the district authorities.

teeth first were drowned and none had ever lived to disprove the tribal beliefs and customs. Where would this conflict lead her?

It led her often to the river. There, sitting on the bank, high above the stream where she had so often brought the water jugs to fill them, she would sit with her baby in her lap, staring down at him. She would hold him in both arms, close to her breast, as the mother at the mission had held her baby and as she herself had learned to hold him, touching him with her lips. She held him as no other black mother ever held a child, bending over him and crooning in a soft, strange voice. Chituka had decreed that her child was *m'wfuti.* But Chituka might be wrong, if only she could make the lower teeth appear through the gums first. She put her fingers in the child's mouth and tried to work the little hidden teeth upward. She felt of the upper teeth and tried to press them back again. Then she bent over the child rocking him and crooning until dusk had fallen and the shadows came crowding across the veldt from the jungle.

When she returned to the village at night I gave beads to the baby and played with him. I wanted her to feel that the baby was under the white man's protection. I could sense the struggle within her. She looked at me with eyes that were puzzled and frightened, and carried the child into her hut, holding him to her breast very gently. I knew this struggle could not last long, and so I watched her.

One day, toward sundown, Tombyou left her hut in the village and went down to the river. She took her

child with her. He was strapped to her back, native fashion, and as she walked, his black head, with its round black eyes closed in sleep, rocked from side to side with her footsteps.

Near where the fallen tree made the rude bridge across the stream, the banks dropped abruptly, like the walls of a canyon. There were vultures flying low and the thorn bushes were alive with the deadly hum of the tse-tse flies. The river running low, in its mid-summer course, revealed the motionless shapes of the crocodiles.

She crouched low, her back to the edge of the cliff that fell straight down to the water and the brown bundle that held her child hung over the precipice. She was young . . . and children—she would have more than this one. This one she had learned to love, not because he was her first-born, but because of the magic of imitation, because of something that had happened within her, a long time ago, at the mission on the hill. Her hands kept working at the knots across her breast that bound the sleeping child to her back. Perhaps the thought of the white man who had tried to reassure her with words and presents for the child flashed through her mind. But before the white man had ever appeared in her land, the laws and customs of her people had existed. Chituka knew . . . and the white man with his missions, his strange words, his weapons, his love, was new to the land. The laws that Chituka knew were old; old as the hills and the Jungle Gods. Her hand slipped the knot, very slowly she straightened, letting the brown bundle

slip. Without looking behind her, she walked swiftly along the path to the village.

. . . . . .

The cook fires were already lighted, and the women, squatting low before them, were preparing the evening's repast of mealie-flour in gourds and tin-pots when Tombyou walked silently back from the river. They saw the cords that had bound her child to her back and they murmured together and nodded. They stopped Tombyou and spoke to her:

"Do not weep," they said, "for if you weep you will be sterile and no other children will come to you."

And they shaved the hair of Tombyou's head that night, so, as they said, new hair would sprout and grow and new life come to Tombyou's womb, and prosperity and wealth to her family.

II

THE MISSIONARIES

THE MISSIONARIES

For upward of 300 years, white missionaries have been making converts among the dark men of Africa. Armed with a superior knowledge, equipped with those attributes of civilization—clothing, firearms, mechanical inventions—in themselves a source of awe and wonder to the native, they have sought, sometimes by persuasion, sometimes by bribery, sometimes by eloquence, often by trickery, to spread "the gospel of light."

From beginning to end, the long and involved story of African missions suggests a curious study in confusion and misunderstanding. The missionaries have come from all parts of the world, bringing to the dark mill of Africa their various spiritual axes to grind. They have come armed and prepared in every detail except the essential one of understanding. Often they have plunged like blind men into the thickets of savagery and superstition; and where they have seemed to clear a pathway with the sharp instrument of their faith, the jungle thicket has grown like a wall behind them.

For the old law of meat to one and poison to another holds nowhere more strongly than in Africa. The black man lives as he does, acts as he does, and thinks as he does, because this living, thinking and acting suits the conditions he finds himself in. His beliefs, his practices, his *tabus* handed down from the

dim light of ages past, have stood the test of time and of nature. His life is as fundamental to the land as the growth of a tree in the jungle or grass on the veldt. His laws and customs have sprung from the soil; he does not know how or where or how long ago, but he does know that obedience to them is the condition of his survival. Out of his necessity he has improvised beliefs and symbols, incantations and fetishes, *tabus* and magic formulas; rites and performances whose origin is lost in time. He finds the white man's conduct strange, his laws unnatural, his practices contradictory. If he kills a "witch" the white man hangs him for it, yet he believes that to kill a witch is good, and to be punished for a good deed seems strange and incomprehensible.

His own practices in these affairs, since they are his own, he finds quite satisfactory. He loves litigations. He looks for every opportunity he can find to collect damages from his neighbors. If you see a fly on a native's back and say to him: "There's a fly on your back," he will probably say to you, "Ah, I did not see the fly and because I didn't see it, it didn't worry me. But now you come along and you have worried me," and up he goes to the chief with his complaint. Or if one native says to another: "You have a nice lot of beautiful wives there," he may reply: "Ah, so you have been looking at my wives. You have trespassed on my property," and again the chief and elders must listen gravely to the matter under dispute.

To him, unlike us, vengeance is not a matter of

punishing the offending person; it is rather to exact retribution from him. He proceeds on the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth with devastating precision. If you kill a man, his relatives will kill you, unless you pay them adequately. If you do not pay up, and manage in some way or other to escape, his spirit will return and make your life unbearable.

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The cult of the "noble savage" has had its day and ceased to be. We know now that man in his primitive state is neither noble nor ignoble, since these are not his own attributes, but distinctions of our own in which we seek to clothe him. The black man in his native state is neither noble nor ignoble, neither moral nor immoral. He is non-moral; having no need for our distinctions in these matters just as he has no need, other than an extravagant one, for our clothing.

And yet this simple point, usually forgotten by the missionaries, is the cause of endless confusion and often of results that are specifically disastrous. For since the black man has always followed the life best suited to the conditions he finds himself placed in, to tell him that certain of his ways are sinful is simply to pervert his instinct in otherwise simple matters and to confuse him. Before, he lived as his fathers before him had always lived. Now he is told that he and his fathers have been living in sin, and that sin is a dreadful thing for which he must suffer eternal punishment. Innocent before, he becomes a sinner by virtue of a stranger's definitions, and this utterly strange thing

he must accept and reconcile in his mind as best he can. For the white missionary has him always at a disadvantage. He is armed with powers that to the black man are full of mystery. His very presence in the dark land is a mysterious thing, and the words of his mouth, therefore, have something of the weight of divine dispensations. The simple, the orderly, and the adequate balance of his mental processes is broken into, and often destroyed. Right things, that have stood the test of the ages, are pronounced wrong things. He has passed from simplicity to confusion.

The same thing applies to clothing. The wife of a certain missionary of the author's acquaintance was shocked at the number of black women who appeared in the mission compound with their breasts exposed. This, which was to her a plain matter of morals, was to the natives a good deal of a puzzle. She had all the indecently dressed dark ladies put out of the compound one day and issued orders that the breasts must be covered. The next day the native women returned with even more intimate parts exposed. They had obeyed instructions, and with the utmost simplicity had removed their loin cloths and wrapped them around their breasts.

And the story is still told of the district commissioner, who, anxious for the good appearance of his people when a British government official paid a visit, issued three yards of calico to each individual in his villages for the purpose of modesty. When the official visitor arrived and the people were called out to greet him, he found to his dismay that they had taken the

cloth and wrapped it around their heads, turban fashion.

The naked savage is the healthy savage. The clothed and "civilized" negro is much more likely to suffer from disease. He has certain simple laws of cleanliness for the body in its natural state. If he adopts the white man's dress it is for ornament only. It becomes a badge of distinction and superiority.* But he never thinks of changing his clothes or taking them off until they drop off. His body which before was clean, if only by the health-bringing play of wind and sun over its surface, accumulates dirt and breeds vermin. When his clothing is wet he lies down and sleeps in it, and when the fire dies out and the cold dawn winds play death in the form of chills and fever comes on him. And the disease and vermin that his unnaturally clothed body breed spread wherever he goes.

To generalize about missionary activities in Africa is as unsafe as to generalize about anything else. There have been good missionaries and bad missionaries, tolerant and patient men and women and fire-eating evangelists whose path through the wilderness of unbelief is blazed by confusion, often by disasters, sometimes by bloodshed and local revolutions. Permanent mission stations have kept up their work of educating and, to a limited extent, industrializing the African children. The results of this work are for future generations to appraise. But the curious, the outstanding feature of missionary activity, perhaps, is its ineffectiveness when compared with the time, the

* See "The Return of the Native," p. 123.

labor, the cost and the prayer expended to carry it forward.

As far as the Faith itself goes, the missionary light is like a single candle burning and wavering in a room full of shadows. Let that candle move or go out, and the shadows, the centuries of superstition and unbelief, glide in again, as the shadow of the nightfall glides from the western mountains across the veldt. For it is useless to argue that missionary activities are too recent to pass any safe judgment upon. Egyptians, Phœnicians, Romans, Hebrews, the high-prowed galleys of Tyre and Sidon, the caravans of Solomon, have touched Africa in their turn and the effect on the darkness of the savage land, that breeds as it were, its own savage mind in its own people, has been as the effect of so many footsteps in the drifting sands of the Sahara.

The Christianized native today is often nothing but a walking contradiction in terms. He learns the gestures appropriate to the new religion; it is doubtful how much else he ever masters. He prays loudly and frequently when the spirit moves him, and sings with gusto such hymns as appeal to his sense of harmony. He adopts the new faith, often enough, as he might adopt a white man's cast-off coat or breeches because being the white man's property it carries with it a certain distinction. In his heart he is still the slave of his old fears, fetishes and superstitions. He may accept the new God, but the Jungle Gods are older, and to them he owes the fealty of his age-old heritage. . . .

UNHAPPY DIFFICULTY OF BLAIERA

To the ripe age of forty-five, Blaiera had lived at peace with his two wives in the village of Chiwefwe. He was an undistinguished but respected member of the community, and lately, mindful of advancing years and the days when his frame would shrink and no longer be pleasing to women, he had taken a young wife, a fresh and tender girl to comfort him. She was of all Blaiera's wives the favorite one, for while she could not cook as well as his first wife and lacked the industry of the second around harvest time, she was young and fat and fine to look at as a young antelope.

When the missionaries came to the village of Chiwefwe, Blaiera thought matters over some time and then decided to adopt the new religion. For while he had never been troubled about religious matters and had never questioned the laws and customs of his tribe in such things, still it seemed to him that it might be a good thing to become a Christian. For one thing, there was the matter of Heaven which the missionaries had talked about, and from the way they described it, it seemed to Blaiera like a very promising place indeed. You did nothing there but sit around in a land of eternal sunshine while the fruits of blessedness grew on the trees and milk and honey was everywhere. And Blaiera had grown fat of late and inactive. For another thing, the new missionaries were giving out

cloth and calico for converts and Blaiera's youngest wife had an inordinate passion for calico. In any event it would cost him nothing, and so Blaiera left the village one day and went to the mission station.

The missionaries greeted him with the fervid warmth customary on such occasions and proceeded at once to business. He could be a Christian they said, but first there were certain conditions to fulfill. There was the question, primarily, of wives. How many wives had Blaiera?

Blaiera replied that he had three wives, two old ones and one who was young and new and very tender indeed. He spoke of his wives with respect and had a good word or two to say for each. The missionaries listened and nodded. It was much as they had expected. Blaiera could become a Christian that very afternoon if he wanted to. But first he would have to renounce two of his wives and keep only one, in the approved and honored Christian fashion.

Blaiera walked back to the village more slowly than he had come, for he had never reckoned with these conditions. He wanted to become a Christian and go to Heaven, since it was a nice place to go to, but he also wanted his three wives. He wanted the first one for her cooking and the second for her work in the harvest, but the third he wanted most of all because she was young and tender. He thought these things over and shook his head. But he had decided to become a Christian, and there was only one way to do it. He must give up his two oldest wives and keep

only the youngest. And he wondered just how he would do it.

For when he had bought these wives, they were young and he had paid for them a considerable price in goats and skins and in chickens. Now they were no longer young, and he suspected that their families would be quite disagreeable when he brought up the question of returning them. Nor could he expect for their return very much as compared with his original investment. It was a very perplexing question indeed, and Blaiera sighed when he thought of it. Nevertheless he went the next day to the family of his first wife and spoke with his original mother-in-law. She was an old woman and reasonable as mothers-in-law went, but she shook her head when Blaiera mentioned his difficulty.

"Why," she said, "should you desire to return *my* daughter? Has she not been a good wife and faithful? If you must return a wife, why not return the girl you married after her? For she comes from the family of Chetomba, who has always had trouble with her children, while the husbands of my daughters have always lived to thank me."

Blaiera listened to these words of wisdom and nodded. But words of wisdom alone could not circumvent his difficulty and for the rest he wanted to become a Christian. He bargained with his mother-in-law for the return of his wife, and she finally consented to take her. But he could not hope to receive much for her, she said, three chickens at the outside, for, as she put it, "My daughter is no longer young

and for many years you have used her. And if I sold her again, no man would pay me very much for her. And so," she said, "if you want to be foolish, Blaiera, and return my daughter to me when you might better return Chetomba's daughter first, it is all right. But I will give you three chickens and no more in return for her."

And so Blaiera said that he would think matters over and that same day he went to the family of his second wife and laid his case before them. At first they were astounded, for it was known that Blaiera had lived at peace with his wives and that his family had prospered. But when they heard that he wanted to become a Christian they understood rather better, for in order to become a Christian, they knew, you had to do some very strange things and the white man's laws were always queer and twisted. But they pointed out that his second wife was no longer young and that for many years he had used her, and under no circumstances could they consent to pay for her more than two chickens. So Blaiera went home and reflected.

He had paid for his first wife three goats and four chickens, and he was to receive three chickens back. He had paid for his second five chickens and two goats, and for all this outlay he was to receive only two chickens. For five goats and nine chickens he was to receive five chickens, and he was to lose two wives, one of whom cooked well and another who worked hard in the harvest. Blaiera thought the matter over for a long time and the following morning he went

to the missionaries. He had worked out a plan which he thought was excellent, for, as he told the missionaries, he had decided to keep all three wives, but to keep two of them as sisters only.

"Ah," said the missionaries, "but one cannot live with one's sisters."

Blaiera said, "But they won't be like my own sisters. They will be just sisters."

But the missionaries did not see the point.

So Blaiera went home and thought it over a little while longer and smoked his pipe over it that night while he was sitting before the cook fire. The mealie-flour had been good that night, and there had been a gravy from some meat that had fallen to Blaiera's share from the hunt of the day before. Dipping his hands in the mealie-flour and drinking the hot gravy, Blaiera shook his head. No man in his old age, he thought, should part with a wife who could cook for him, and no man who respected women should part with a wife who worked well in the harvest. He thought of the five chickens he would receive for two wives and he thought of the Christian religion. It would be nice, he thought, to go to Heaven, but not at that price. Only a wealthy man, he decided, could afford to become a Christian. He, Blaiera, would remain as he was, for Heaven was a long way off after all, and there were still many years on earth remaining to him.

And not all men, as he well knew, had a wife who could cook, a wife who could harvest, and a wife who was soft and round and tender.

THOMAS, SON OF GOD *

Thomas, Son of God, came over the mountains into Shawira's country.

He was short, with shoulders broad as an ox's, and a powerful chest. His eyes were small and red, and his face wore a hard, set, criminal expression. Under his arm he carried an unwieldy slab of ironwood, heavy as a block of granite, cut to resemble a large missionary Bible. Over his head a huge sunshade of banana leaves was held by a naked black man, who sweated and puffed under its weight. Behind, straggled four or five women, his wives, and half a dozen porters bearing on their heads boxes containing this dignitary's possessions. And last of all came his henchmen and executive, Kampeshi, sullen of face, lean and treacherous; a strange degenerate.

The short, square-built black man walked along the trail in the full blaze of the afternoon sunshine, planting his feet down squarely, murmuring to himself and chanting. His tread was the tread of a conqueror; his small, bloodshot eyes were the eyes of a madman. He clutched the ironwood Bible tightly under one arm and flung the other out in strange, wide gestures. For the spirit was moving within him and that night he would make many converts.

Thomas, the Son of God, product of a revivalist mission, was on his way, a squat and sinister figure, a

* Copyright, 1929, by "Plain Talk."

brown, moving smudge in the sunstruck immensity of the veldt of Northern Rhodesia, to spread the gospel of light.

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Of all the strange figures that a strange and incalculable country has yielded to the light, his was assuredly one of the most portentous. For all the curious and lamentable confusion that sometimes follows in the wake of mission activities in Africa, he stands as a sinister symbol. Yet his story, carried in the terse phraseology of a government report, is known to few beside the white commissioner of the district he visited with prayers, psalm-singing, baptisms, murders and disasters. For if to the casual bystander his figure seems unaccountably curious and bewildering, in the land that brought him to the light he was only one among many.

Thomas as a man was a product of the Luangwa tribe of Northern Rhodesia. As a receptacle of the faith, as *Mwana Lesa,* the Son of God, as a harbinger of light and healing, as a specialist in salvation and murder, he was the product of a Watch Tower, *Wa-Chita-Wala,* mission in the foothills of the Irumi mountains across which he had come when he first appeared with his Bible, his umbrella carrier and porters, in Shawira's country.

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He had started his career humbly, as a hut-maker in his own village in the Luangwa country, and until the founding of the Watch Tower mission, he seems

to have been an active member of the community.

He was also a maker of bark cloth, and few, it was said, could equal him in the skill with which he removed the bark from the *musamba* tree and pounded and prepared it for wearing apparel and blankets. Even then he was known as a strange man, detached and silent for days, and on other days brutal and violent. But he was an excellent and intelligent worker, and the missionaries saw they could use him.

They had come into the Luangwa country, this man and his wife, filled with zeal. They were new to Africa and strange to its people, and they were young and moved by the strange things they were seeing. They were moved beyond anything else by the condition, the plight, of the people, for they saw them not as they were and as they always had been, but they saw them through eyes trained to civilized standards; trained to perceive values and to pronounce things right or wrong according to their inherited tradition. And their eyes were too bright with their hope and enthusiasm to see that the black man also had his inherited tradition and a sense of right and wrong suitable to the conditions he was born into.

They had brought with them into the Luangwa country numerous tents and camping outfits and a retinue of sulky black porters. And these black porters had vanished, muttering, as soon as they received the pay that had been stipulated for the three day's *safari.* They were dropped, with their possessions sprawling around them, bright tinware cooking implements, patent stoves, cots and canned foodstuffs,

looking like the plunder of a sporting goods store, on a hillside. And they set to work with commendable alacrity to make the wilderness comfortable.

First they would need a good-sized mission building, and for this they hired laborers from the nearby village, men who could mix adobe and others who could lay thatch on roofs. And among these laborers was one who from the first they singled out for the expertness and intelligence of his craftsmanship. He was a powerful, square-built black man, with a sullen face, but he worked with a zeal that commended itself to them. The spirit of their heavenly enterprise, they felt, must in some way or other have entered into him, and he was one of their earliest converts.

They took him one day to the river dressed in a white sheet, immersed him, prayed over him and gave him a Christian name in exchange for the heathen one he had borne since childhood. They called him Thomas, and this he corrupted to Tomos and altered, after the native fashion, by adding an "iyo." "I-Thomas was his name from henceforth, or as he would have put it, Tomosiyo.

As a convert he soon began to exceed the fondest of their expectations. He was more than an apt pupil, he was an aggressive one. In the "classes" that gathered for instruction on the hillside, before the main building with its meeting room was finished, his coal-black face started out from the sea of dark faces around it by virtue of a certain fiery smoulder that sprang now and again to his round, small eyes. The rest of that face was heavy, brutish, criminal, but the

eyes illuminated it as embers illuminate a black bed of ashes. After the meeting was over, the sullen rapture still seemed to have possession of him, and they watched with delight the secondhand results of their work for the Lord as Tomosiyo stood on the steps of the unfinished mission, chanting and swaying and murmuring, until the crowd of the idle and curious gathered around him, and many who had come to watch began to pray under the spell of his magnetism. Once, toward sundown, while working near the roof of the building, the spirit seized him and he began lifting his feet up and down on the rungs of the ladder and dropped a hopper of adobe blocks on the head of a worker below him. The head was hard and the blocks soft, but thereafter when he was taken with his spiritual seizures, Tomosiyo was asked to descend from aloft. There was no periodicity to Tomosiyo's attacks of fervor and he fell on his knees at odd times and cried out in a loud voice like the prophets of old, and while no one could understand what he said, there was no doubting his inspiration.

And the missionaries talked about him often. He was an example, they said, of what could be done by well-directed zeal and persistence. He would live yet to spread their fame. He did, and in the most extraordinary manner imaginable.

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His title, *Mwana Lesa,* the Son of God, the burlesque dignity of the shabby retinue in the midst of which he first appeared in Shawira's country, the umbrella carrier, the native porters and Kampeshi, the

hermaphrodite, were all later creations of Tomosiyo's original inspiration. He did not assume them in the presence, or even in the neighborhood, of his friends, the missionaries. He disappeared one day while the roof was still half finished. In the village there was a shrugging of shoulders and a general expression of blankness. No one knew anything about Tomosiyo, and as he had been acting very strangely lately at home, like a man *m'wfuti* or continually drunk on banana beer no one wanted to know. He had disappeared, that was all. Being optimists in the matter of human nature, as became their profession, the missionaries preferred to think the best of it. Undoubtedly Tomosiyo had been called away by the sickness of a relative. Undoubtedly he would return. They hoped it would be soon, for the rainy season was coming, the roof was unfinished, and they prayed for him.

He never returned to the mission or to the Luangwa country. Instead he created out of the mixed and curious impressions of the new religion that had entered his mind, a vision of nightmare proportions. He had heard the missionaries speak of the Son of God, and of how his return on the Day of Judgment was awaited. And the title, Son of God, with the superlative dignity it suggested, had pleased and delighted him. The idea of God (*Lesa*) having a son had never occurred to him, for it was no part of the religion he had inherited. But he knew that God had a wife, and it was natural that he should have children. If he had a son, it was quite possible that this

son might also have brothers. And he did not claim to be the only and original son of God, but one, perhaps, among many. It seemed only fitting that the Son of God should have wives fitting his station, an umbrella carrier and a retinue. He made the banana leaf affair himself, just as he had carved the ironwood "Bible," modelled on the great book of the missionaries. He threatened and cajoled a number of the less reputable women of the village into following him; he cajoled and bribed the porters into swelling his procession; he bribed and bullied the umbrella carrier into staggering along behind him. And with Kampeshi, the hermaphrodite, to bring up the rear, his procession was complete.

Kampeshi served as his special envoy on many missions of importance, and his origins are obscure. But the presence in the retinue of the Son of God of a freak of nature with the breasts of a woman and the lower body of a man and woman combined, was attributable to the added luster and prestige it would shed on Tomosiyo's progress. Kampeshi served him body and soul, and was the last of his "disciples" to desert him.

For in Tomosiyo the black man's flare for pomp and swagger was no mere mood but an abiding conviction of his own greatness in the face of the conquests he contemplated. Before he started across the mountains he had stolen from the missionaries a white shirt and a pair of khaki shorts, and these, alone, in a country where only chiefs and elders wore night shirts

in the day time, distinguished him as a remarkable being, a personage.

He probably lacked the reflective processes to define for himself his motives. There was in him a powerful thirst for aggrandizement, but his "seizures" appear to have been genuine enough and were probably of the epileptic variety. His progress in the land of the Lalas, and his later invasion of the Congo, was marked throughout by a curious treachery and cunning. From the beginning he exacted a toll from his "converts." Toward the end this toll was fixed on a sliding scale, depending on the age of the Heaven-seeker.

He threw whole villages into a state of ecstatic expectation and left in his train broken families, ruin and desolation. He stalked through the land like a figure from the realms of some unearthly phantasmagoria; a living nightmare, armed with his madman's faith in himself and his fearlessness, and a gift of terrible and persuasive oratory.

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He was not the first black man in Africa to put his Christian enlightenment to practical and mischievous purposes, for in Nyassaland, to the south and west, there had come in recent years a Baptist negro preacher, born and educated in America, who had assumed the name of Chilembwe. He had stirred the plantation workers and some of the tribes to revolt against the white man's authority, for he had preached the doctrine he had been brought up in, that

is, perfect racial equality. He had told how a war was being fought in the white man's native land of Europe, and that the white men were killing each other so rapidly that soon there would be none of them left on the earth. So the black man's day was coming, he said, and his words spread like fire through the district. On one great estate where it was claimed that the negro workers were being treated unjustly, they rose in revolt under his leadership and killed the white manager and beheaded him. And with the white man's head before him on the pulpit, he preached a sermon calling his brethren to arms against the invasion of their land and their enslavement.

Perhaps his example stood like a warning in the mind of Tomosiyo, for the rebellion was short lived. Chilembwe had been tried and hanged as a murderer. Perhaps he had never heard of the disturbances in the distant land near Lake Nyassa. In any event he was shrewder than his predecessor and more cunning, for he preached only the things that had been taught him and that could be turned to good advantage and he seems, on the whole, to have borne no grudge against white authority. The missionaries had equipped him with an entire stock in trade of spiritual wares which he could dispose of to his own advantage. His later clashes with the white men and the disasters that followed his sermons were unforeseen and incidental, although he was quick to turn them to his advantage.

He crossed the mountains into Shawira's country, swaggering in the pomp of his ragged retinue, his brain feverish with dreams and ambitions. Within

sight of the thatched *shambas* of the largest village, the procession paused, and Kampeshi loped on ahead to gather the crowds around him by displaying the wonders of his half-woman's body. Kampeshi it was who spoke of the great Advent, of the approach of the spiritual conqueror, the Son of God who might even now be seen a little way off, praying and wrestling with the spirits of his revelation. And it was Kampeshi who sang of the glories of his master and his retinue, straggling out like a white man's *safari;* and of the dignity of his master, dressed in shorts and in a shirt, like a powerful white chief. It was Kampeshi who in his high sing-song voice stirred the village from its torpor, and drew the crowds outside to witness the approach of the Master. But it was Tomosiyo who rose from the ground and with eyes flashing red in the blaze of the sunshine, stretched out his arms to greet and bless the procession of the wondering and incredulous who flocked from the village to see him.

And Tomosiyo spoke and told them of the revelation that had come to him through the white missionaries in the Luangwa country. He told them how voices had communed with him, after his baptism in the river, and of how these voices had bidden him to go forth as the Son of God and spread light where before there had been darkness. He told them of the glories of his revelation, and his voice was gentle and persuasive. He described the Paradise of milk and of honey, the new land above the clouds, where the hut roofs sparkled like gold in the morning sunshine,

and his gestures were free and eloquent. There were no gardens to plant, for gardens grew of themselves. In a land of eternal sunshine you slept and ate and slept again. You neither hunted nor fished, and no one stirred you in the early morning and prodded you into the ranks of the *safari*. There were no evil spirits there; all the spirits smiled benevolently upon you.

He spoke of the necessity for baptism, and his eyes grew hard and his manner sterner. He told of strange things he had heard and strange visitations that had broken in on his dreams and slumbers. He told how Heaven was open to all those who were baptized in the river and received from him a blessing. He spoke of the slight fee for his services, and his voice was mild again and deprecating, and he changed the subject quickly to his great black book, his Bible. For it contained magic words, he said, and signs that only he could understand, and it had been sent down to him by a spirit from Heaven. His face grew cold and sullen, and his eyes threw on the sea of faces and staring eyes around him the fixed and terrible regard of a madman as he lifted the great ironwood book on high and advanced toward them, threatening and shouting. Let anyone who doubted him stand forth! . . . But they shrank back from his gaze in terror. Let them know then, that all who did not pay the fee and come to the river for baptism were witches. . . . And once more his voice grew soft and persuasive as he spoke of the wonders of Heaven that would be theirs for the simple act of immersion.

He was convincing, he was irresistible, and he was

very terrible to look upon as he spoke. No one who had eyes to see could doubt that a spirit had seized on Tomosiyo for his eyes were red as coals of fire, and on his lips flecks of foam were appearing. He swayed and tossed his arms about like a mountain tree in the grip of a tempest, and the women of his retinue were swaying and moaning as though in fear and terror, and Kampeshi lay on the ground, kicking his heels, beating his breast, rolling his eyes and groaning aloud in his frenzy. And here and there in the black crowd, gathered together under the *musamba* tree on the outskirts of Shawira's village, voices took up a moaning refrain over which Tomosiyo's voice rang out and swelled and fell again, and an aged woman, the mother of Chimbakuma, fell on her face on the ground beside Kampeshi, raving.

She cried aloud for the Heaven of milk and honey, the land that Tomosiyo was promising, for she was old, she said, and still they made her toil, in the hot sun in the harvest. And her sons-in-law were hard men, and though she was old and loved to sit in the shade, they gave her no tobacco. And Tomosiyo told how the tobacco grew in the land of his promise; how it rose from the ground, ripe and luxuriant; how the leaves turned golden and brown in the sunshine; how the spirits moved around with calabash pipes and gourds full of banana beer and meat with much fat and gravy. And other women fell down on the ground beside the mother of Chimbakuma, and the ones who were standing cried aloud with one voice for the land of milk, of honey and tobacco. Only the men hung

back, as Tomosiyo, still chanting and gesticulating, led the procession down the trail, through the thorn bushes that fringed the banks of the river. He chose a place where it was broad and shallow, and the women followed him as the rats had followed the mythical piper of Hamlin, while the men lined the banks, muttering to themselves, held back by their fear and irresolution.

Tomosiyo dipped the women, one after another, praying over them and shouting out snatches of the phrases the missionaries had taught him, and he warned them to stay apart from their men who would not be baptized and were witches. They must neither cook for them, he said, nor sleep in their huts, for if they did the power of the baptism would lose its hold upon them, and they would be as they had been before, unfit for the land of milk and honey. And the men who had heard these words shook their heads in consternation, for they knew how women are when they have a grudge against their husbands; they had visions of days without food and nights of depressing solitude. One by one they moved forward uncertainly and entered the shallow river. Kampeshi, standing on the banks, made a note of their faces and the number of them, so that later he might collect from them an adequate fee for the service his master was performing.

And so the whole village of Shawira was baptized in the river, and the young women delirious with excitement, returned to their homes. But the old women upon whom the revelation had fallen with the most

THOMAS WITH ONE OF HIS CONVERTS (THOMAS AT RIGHT)

PART OF THE HEAVENLY PROCESSION (THOMAS IS SEATED SECOND FROM THE RIGHT)

force of all, on account of the shortness of the earthly life that still stretched ahead of them, hobbled stiffly along the path that led through the tall grass to the village, with their old eyes fixed inwardly on the vision Tomosiyo had brought them.

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It was the mother of Chimbakuma in the village of Shawira, who first brought Tomosiyo's activities under the surveillance of the white authorities.

For this wrinkled creature whose old age was heavy with sorrow and whose sons-in-law gave her no tobacco, had been filled with the heavenly light to overflowing.

There is a limit beyond which the human imagination, black or white, must give in to its longings for the ineffable, and Chimbakuma's mother, as a woman who had toiled and borne many children felt that the earth no longer held for her a great deal of promise. She may also have feared the wearing down of the spell Tomosiyo's baptism had laid upon her and the consequent loss of the bliss that had been promised her. When she was found one morning, shortly after the prophet's departure, in the grass near the trail to the river, dead, with a gash in her side, and a short assegai lying on the ground beside her, covered with her blood, it was feared in the village that she had met with foul play on her way to the river for water. But when a search revealed no water gourds near her, and when, a few mornings later, two other aged women were found dead on the very edge of the river, it was seen that they had speared themselves.

For Tomosiyo's wonder-working words were too powerful for the frail vessel of the human mind, especially in its senescence, and from other villages, along the route he was pacing in the glory of his white shirt and under the dignified seclusion of his banana-leaf umbrella, came more ugly and sinister rumors. In one village alone, that of Chiwefwe, on the banks of the Luensemfwe River, there was a death toll of six souls, anxious to deliver themselves from the shackles of earthly existence; overanxious to take up their residence in Tomosiyo's city of gold-thatched *shambas* before it became overcrowded with the population of the neighborhood. For Heaven, in the white man's version of it, and especially in the milk-and-honey version of the Watch Tower revivalists, they had never heard of before, although they knew that the soul lived after the death and dissolution of the body. Hitherto they had anticipated the future as a dim reflection of their lives on earth; their lives that like all other lives were minglings of peace and anguish, joy and sorrow. They had built on the outskirts of their villages tiny houses for the departed spirits and placed in them handsful of tobacco and bowls of mealie-flour, so that the spirits, on their wanderings, might not go hungry, and they looked forward to the day when, in the dim after-life, their children would provide for their wants. But never with milk and honey.

Never had they imagined a land where the grain and the tobacco grew by itself and needed no planting and hoeing. Never had they imagined a state of things where in villages of gold-roofed huts that shone in the

morning sunshine, you did nothing from one meal to another and heavenly spirits ministered to your slightest wants. And since the wish is father to the thought in Africa as elsewhere, the glamour of Tomosiyo's Heaven was irresistible. What was the use in waiting, when their place in this land was already arranged for them by Tomosiyo's ceremony of baptism and his incantations? And it was this rumor of death and of a strange suicide mania in the track of an itinerant black preacher, that drifted back to the ears of the white authorities at the *Boma.* And Chimbakuma, whose mother had been the first to suffer from her anxiety to beat her neighbors to Heaven, was brought before the Commissioner and commanded to tell what he knew.

It was not much, for Chimbakuma, no longer young himself, a little afraid of his wives who had been among the first and most enthusiastic of Tomosiyo's converts, refused to speak. He admitted that his mother had killed herself, but was inclined to blame it on his brothers-in-law who had refused her the comfort of tobacco. For, as he put it, why should a woman in her old age, who had reared and sold six daughters and could count her grandchildren as the leaves of a tree, be denied one of the few comforts for which she had a craving? He spoke with an air of affected pathos, and the Commissioner who was not new to Africa and its people, cut him off abruptly. He did not press the examination further. Instead he sent a detachment of black soldiers to arrest Tomosiyo. In a week they returned with their prisoner. The

trial that followed served merely to deepen the general air of mystery that followed his doings. No one would bear witness against him. In his presence the natives cast down their eyes and trembled. For the rumor of his strange powers had increased to nightmare proportions. He had power over evil spirits, they said, to send them out against his enemies. He could catch souls from the very lips of people as they breathed, so that they fell down at his feet dead. Afterwards he would keep these souls in his possession and send them out on errands of darkness. He had a book full of the white man's mysterious charms and incantations, and this book he carried always with him. He had a demon in his retinue, a creature who was half a man and half a woman, and it was said that this creature was also gifted with powers of evil. He was the Son of God, *Mwana Lesa,* and as a divinely appointed deputy of his father, he controlled the admissions to Heaven, the land of gleaming hut-roofs beyond the clouds.

In the end Tomosiyo was released, for no one would testify against him, and of all Tomosiyo's claims to power they told the white man nothing. All that could be ascertained was that he had talked to people and then taken them to the rivers and bathed them. This seemed hardly an offense under the existing code of the civil administration.

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Thomas, the Son of God, once more crossed the mountains and disappeared. With him went his wives, his umbrella carrier, his Bible and Kampeshi. He

was afraid, perhaps, that the white commissioner would change his mind and imprison him. And for a time the Land of the Lalas and Northern Rhodesia was rid of him.

He crossed into the Congo country and followed the course of the Munyungashi River. He needed the rivers for his ceremonies of baptism. And rumors drifted back slowly. They were for the most part vague, but all were spoken in terror. For Tomosiyo had improved upon the early simplicity of his missionary methods.

Just why and when this change of tactics was adopted, the records do not reveal. But the logic of his actions was inevitable enough. He was dispatching his overimpatient converts to the land of milk and honey and shining hut roofs simply and expeditiously with his own hands and with the aid of the heavy ironwood "Bible." He may have felt that since he was charging an admission fee to Heaven it was up to him to expedite the process of getting there. He may have considered a change of plan advisable in view of the white commissioner's anxiety over the suicide rate. Or he may have been impressed with the notion that dead converts tell no tales. At any rate he was immersing all the most enthusiastic of his "believers" with the aid of Kampeshi and holding them under until they could no longer breathe. He was releasing the souls from the bodies of those who rose too persistently to the surface by a single well-delivered blow of his Bible on the skull.

How considerably the population of Heaven was in-

creased by Tomosiyo's new and efficient tactics in the Congo will never be learned. Estimates vary, but the official records set the number well above one hundred. In the meantime, a brother of Chimbakuma, who had been called on to testify against Tomosiyo before he had crossed the border, had died of pneumonia and Tomosiyo was quick to turn the incident to his advantage. Death, he pointed out, fell like a blight on all who attempted to harm him. The white man's chains, he said, could not hold him. He had broken them and the white man himself had trembled before his threats and the power that his revelations had given him. His fame spread through all the villages along the Munyungashi and the crocodiles feasted on the corpses of the impatient Heaven-seekers. Whenever he could gather together a group of people, he was irresistible, and they followed him to the river like sheep to the slaughter. And then a reaction had set in, and the people rose up against him.

The spark once kindled blazed like wildfire, and the Son of God was chased from village to village back toward the Rhodesian border. His porters threw down their loads and took to their heels, his wives deserted him, his umbrella carrier fell into a swamp and sank, still clutching the ponderous symbol of his master's dignity. Only Kampeshi stood by him. Tomosiyo took to the bush, and while in flight was fired on, and the bullet, glancing off, pierced Kampeshi's shoulder. His pursuers, seeing that bullets did not harm him, gave up the chase, and Tomosiyo escaped to the mountains; there to gather together the remnants of

his retinue and add to it where he could, to construct a new umbrella of banana leaves and to boast more loudly than ever. . . . For now he could claim that his life was sacred. Bullets, when they approached him, dropped powerless or were deflected by virtue of the special atmosphere that surrounded him. . . . He recrossed the Irumi Mountains and appeared once more in Northern Rhodesia.

He did not appear at once, in person, at the village of Kafuula, but sent his henchman, Kampeshi, as was his custom, on ahead of him. And the young chief, Kafuula, who had heard of Tomosiyo's activities and the displeasure he had given the white authorities, attempted in vain to restrain his people from flocking out to meet the messenger of Heaven. But they refused to listen to him, for his father had recently been accused of witchcraft and had been chased from the village. It did not become the son of a witch, they said, to stand against the authority of the Son of God. He listened to Tomosiyo's sermon unmoved and was unimpressed by the sight of Kampeshi, rolling on the ground at the feet of his master and groaning. He was unimpressed by the new retinue, even by the new banana-leaf umbrella. He followed the procession to the river, but would not enter the water. And finally his people turned on him, murmuring. Had not Tomosiyo said that all who were not baptised were witches? They did not wish to be ruled by a witch. He would prove to them that he was no witch, but when Tomosiyo tried to duck him and Kampeshi approached with the ironwood Bible held at a threaten-

ing elevation, he broke loose. He let himself float on the water at some distance, and his people standing on the banks, watching, said: "Like a bad egg."

"He floats," they said, "like an egg that is rotten. He must be a witch, for he floats like an egg."

And the young chief, Kafuula, more impressed by their threats than their logic, took to his heels and ran to the *Boma*. He reported the return of the heavenly messenger from the Congo. He told of his new methods of conversion begun in the Congo and asked the help of the white man to rid the land of Tomosiyo forever.

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The authorities were aroused. Tomosiyo, whose deeds lay on the land like a blight, had returned to Rhodesia. His return was not only an affront to the *Boma* authority, since he had been bidden never to return, but in view of past happenings was a threat to the peace of the country. And this time soldiers were sent out in numbers to capture him and bring him to justice.

The whispers and rumors flew ahead of their coming, and the heavenly procession once more turned its face to the wilderness. But not for long, for Tomosiyo was growing bolder and more cunning. He knew that he could rely on his converts to shield him and on the fear that the very mention of his name was spreading through the country. Anyone who betrayed him, he said, would drop dead while the words were on his lips, and this rumor circulated through the villages together with many others. In the meantime he

had adopted a new plan of salvation and invented newer and finer methods of procedure.

For a long time now he had been charging his converts a price for the privilege of baptism, for the assurance of entering the land of idleness and plenty. As gatekeeper he had been exacting a varying toll, calculated on the possession of the privileged. His prices ranged from a shilling for adults through six pence for youths and girls to three pence for children in arms and babes unborn. If there was no cash available, he accepted as before, returns in kind, in elephant tusks and in the skins of the leopard and the lion. Now he was proceeding to even more profitable tactics with the aid of a certain chief, Luwasya.

He had approached Luwasya in his own village, first through Kampeshi and then in person. He opened the parley, a squat, sinister figure, standing under the shade of his umbrella, in front of Luwasya's hut with Kampeshi standing on one foot and then the other beside him. He spoke of his revelations and methods, and then the conversation drifted to tribal politics. Had Luwasya any enemies, any *evil eyes,* in his villages? Naturally he had. What chief, working for the good of his people and enamored of justice had not? Then the logic of the situation was inevitable. He, Tomosiyo, would undertake to convert Luwasya's enemies. Luwasya need only proclaim that all who did not submit were witches, and in this statement Tomosiyo would back him with his well-known and adequate powers of persuasion. Luwasya would pay Tomosiyo a small good-will consideration for his serv-

ices, a gift, if he wished to call it so, suitable to his position and the dignity of his retinue. As for the enemies, the *evil eyes,* they would follow Tomosiyo to the river and from there proceed directly to Heaven. Their gratified spirits would smile down on Luwasya from the land of milk and honey and shining hut roofs. The fee could be deducted from the earthly possessions of the happy departed, who would have no further use for them. Thus all parties would be more than satisfied. . . .

He proceeded to work at once, and before sundown that day had sent ten *evil eyes* to their eternal rest. Then he improved on the occasion to call the women of the village together for a baptism ceremony and a sermon. The men stood on the bank, watching jealously, for some of Tomosiyo's gestures were difficult to connect with matters of pure religion. And Tomosiyo prayed over the women and revealed new truths to them. It was idle deception, he declared, to think that there was only one way of getting to Heaven. If ten of them would sleep with him that night in the hut Luwasya had courteously put at his disposal, five on each side, he would guarantee that one and all should have heavenly dreams. And the women, impressed by Tomosiyo's words, quite as much as by his gestures, accepted. . . .

He proceeded south, following the course of the Lusenfwa River, and now his procession, swollen like a spring freshet, gathering the curious, the idle, the reverential and the fear-struck to it as it advanced, straggled out across the veldt. His porters staggered

under the growing burden of his heavenly fees and possessions. His wives were increased by the numbers of those whose original taste of the joys of the after life with Tomosiyo had quite spoiled them for a humdrum existence with their husbands. His success was fantastic and incredible and the whole country was in an uproar. The relatives of his victims filled the night with their shrieks and lamentations. A pall of smoke hung over villages where the huts of the happy converts were burned to prevent their spirits from returning. . . . In Kapshi he shouted snatches of the missionary prayers while he delivered a crowd of *evil eyes* and a number of aged people from the toils of earthly existence, Kampeshi standing nearby with the great, black Bible, the symbol of final deliverance. . . .

And here the soldiers from the *Boma,* breaking in on a post-baptism sermon, almost ran him to earth. He escaped into the veldt and was lost sight of, while his procession was dispersed in utter confusion. . . . Then word was brought that the Son of God had taken refuge in the bush, in the M'Kushi sub-district, near the Congo border.

. . . . . .

Tomosiyo, the Heaven-born, the Son of God, was a fugitive from justice with a price on his head. The rest of his story is a record of confusion and disaster. His own faithless converts turned on him and betrayed him.

He had buried his accumulated treasures of hides and ivory in the ground, so they told the white man, and had dispersed his whole retinue. He had even

dismissed the dog-like Kampeshi and hidden himself alone in an inaccessible place of swamps and tall elephant grass, where he lurked like some prowling beast driven to its last defense and at bay.

He had availed himself, so they said, of a strange medicine, a "Water from Heaven" to ward off all disaster. With a drop of this on his tongue, a word or breath brought instant death to his enemies. He rubbed it on his arm, and one blow of his fist laid a man's skull open. So he lay hidden, protected by superior powers, dangerous and probably invincible.

The black soldiers from the *Boma,* less convinced of Tomosiyo's invincibility and prowess than the villagers, proceeded to surround his retreat. They had served too long with the white man to believe that water from Heaven was anything but rain. But still caution seemed desirable, and a day or two, or perhaps three, might well be spent in talking things over, and so they sat down and built their fires and made themselves comfortable. And there they might have sat until Tomosiyo escaped, had not a certain Luiwari of the village of Chipanga-Panga, volunteered to reconnoiter his position.

Luiwari knew the swamp country, and he knew something about Tomosiyo. He took a basket of flour with him. He crawled through the bushes until he heard a rustling and then stopped. He spoke:

"Wa-wishi-fwe. Our little father. Luiwari is here. Your friend is here, Tomosiyo."

Tomosiyo's voice answered:

"What brings you here?"

"I bring you food. The *Boma* people are watching you."

And suddenly the waiting ashkaris heard a hoarse shout, the sound of a blow and of a heavy body falling, and they rushed forward to a man to the aid of Luiwari. . . .

Tomosiyo lay in the grassy thickets, on the black moist earth, stunned by a blow from Luiwari's assegai, and his captors pressed around him, shouldering each other out of the way in their anxiety to look at the face of the fallen Son of God. His white shirt, the emblem of his importance and dignity, was torn and stained, his cheeks had fallen in, his whole body was wasted and emaciated from the long days of his starvation and concealment. He lay with his eyes closed, breathing heavily, as a man breathes who has run a long race and lost, and on the black faces of the soldiers pressing around him were grins of triumph, of frank and unmerciful delight in the spectacle of a fallen foe. For the power of *Mwana Lesa* had deserted him, and behold, he was a man as other men were and powerless before the white man.

They bound him with thongs of *lushishi* grass that cut through the flesh at his wrists and ankles, and they dragged his living body out of the swamp as they would have dragged out the carcass of a dead animal.

And three days later, Thomas, the Son of God, the product of a Watch Tower mission, swung lifeless from a rope, fastened to the limb of a tall tree in the grounds of the *Boma* building.

HALLELUJAH

To their own God, Lesa, Chiwahli people never pray, for in matters of religion they appear to reason at least as admirably as the missionaries who are sent to teach them better. It is manifest to them that Lesa is great and that they are small. Lesa has created everything and all things, and they stand on a plane of equality with all things before Lesa's throne.

To pray to Lesa would, therefore, be not only absurd but presumptuous. To raise their voices with the chirping of the crickets, the croaking of frogs, and the bark of the jackal—all of whom are equally Lesa's creations—would be, perhaps, to lower their own estimates of themselves. Moreover it would be bothering Lesa. A chief who has the affairs of ten villages to look after can't stop to analyze the grievances of every wailing child. And Lesa whose power stretches from the rising of the sun to its setting has no time for the minor personal sorrows of mankind.

The native has his own account of the creation, his own Adam and Eve. Lesa does not bestride the universe in lonely majesty. He has a wife, and he shares in the common lot of mankind in respect to domestic troubles. When the thunderstorm crashes through the forest trees and rolls out across the undulations of the prairie, there is trouble above. Lesa's wife is scolding. And Lesa's life, therefore, is complicated enough without adding to it tales, no matter how impressive, of earthly woes.

Nor do they ever think of pressing on Lesa's wife their earthly sorrows. For who, they say, would want to pray to a woman; and what could he possibly expect to get for it if he did?

. . . . . .

A fringe of low trees with feathery tops that swayed and whispered in the winds of the rainy season, screened the village of Kafuula from the river, and on the other side the round, smooth breast of a hill lay bare to the quivering sunshine. Half way up the slope, a clump of cedars threw a grateful shade, and here when the missionaries came, they built their house. They were representatives of the Watch Tower, the *Wa-Chitawala,* movement.

It was an imposing affair, that house, and the natives, as yet unimpressed by the wonders of the new religion, watched its erection with a vast curiosity. They had never seen bricks before and here was a whole house being built of them. Their houses were round and thatched with straw; this new house was square and covered with sheets of corrugated iron that gleamed in the sun. Their huts were dark inside, but into this building the sun came streaming through holes in the wall which admitted the light but were proof against wind and rain. You could look through these holes, but you could not put your hand through them and at this they shook their heads, wondering. For what was the purpose, they said, in building a house and then putting many holes in it? Their own huts had only one hole and through that hole you crawled to enter. But in this house there were square

holes all in a row, with a vaster hole between them, closed off by a wooden door. It was another instance of the white man's clever folly. They stood and watched the man who was to tell them about the new God, perspiring and shouting and giving directions. He was a thin little man with a voice that cut like a whip-lash. His face, they thought, must be unusual although it was hard to see because his helmet was too large and covered most of it. They looked at him and then at the hut with the corrugated iron roof that dominated the whole hillside. They shook their heads. "He must be a big fool," they said, "for he builds his house out of small pieces of mud when he could use large ones and he leaves many holes in the walls when he has built it."

When their new house was finished, the thin man with the hat that hid his face, and the little fat man who was with him, came down the hill and went through the village from *shamba* to *shamba*. The thin man opened a book and from it he sang strange hymns, translated into the native tongue, in a high, nasal voice. The fat man, standing back of him, mopped his brow, rose on his toes, rolled his eyes and shouted "Hallelujah" in a loud voice that frightened young children and the sick and aged. Then the thin man closed his book and shouted, "Come out with your charms and medicine pots. Bring them out here to the daylight. For unless you come out with them and are baptized, *we shall think you are witches.*"

Now, since a man may be a witch without even sus-

pecting it until his neighbors suddenly fall on him, if you say to a man that you believe him to be a witch you frighten him badly. There is no way of his telling what that curious other self of his may be up to and hence he is thrown on his defensive. The burden of proof rests with the accused. He will take any step to show that he is not a witch. The missionaries knew this and had taken advantage of one of the most popular practices in current use in Africa.

It was conversion by compulsion and what followed might have been taken for granted. From all over the village of Kafuula men and women came, carrying snake skins and sticks and medicine pots. These they laid on the ground in front of the missionaries. Then a procession was formed and they all marched down to the river for the baptism, the thin missionary in front singing glad hymns through his nose in a sorrowful voice. From time to time the fat man who brought up the rear threw out short arms like the wings of a bantam rooster and shouted "Hallelujah." This frightened the people in the rear rank who thought he must be possessed by a spirit since it was impossible to tell by his expression that it was the Holy Ghost which had seized him and they hurried quickly to the river bank where the first missionary had already begun solemnly to dip the women.

That evening there were services for the newly converted in the great hut-with-the-iron-roof. The thin missionary sang another hymn in the native tongue. The fat man preached a sermon and the topic of the sermon was "Jesus is with us tonight." Hav-

ing only a limited vocabulary in the native tongue, he was confused. The natives sat on wooden benches or on the floor, rolling their eyes, catching at whatever phrases they could interpret. What they understood was that Jesus, the Son of God, was coming to the hut-with-the-iron-roof tonight.

After the service they walked down the hill to the village again. Twilight had fallen, and the cook fires blinked like red, watchful eyes in the dusk. They lit their own fires, and their wives cooked food for them. One by one the fires went out and silence, broken by the whispering of a little wind in the tree tops and the croaking of frogs from the swamp near the river, stole over the village. The events of the day had fallen from their minds smoothly and easily, as a drowsy child sheds his clothes. From the open veldt around them crept a vast uneasiness of animal voices. Light still streamed through the square holes in the wall of the house-with-the-iron-roof on the hill, and this light moved and swayed as the shadows of the tall trees moved across it. And suddenly someone, remembering what the fat little missionary had said, rose to his feet and walked from hut to hut. "The Son of God was coming tonight," and here they sat by their fires, blinking and preparing for slumber. Jesus Christ was coming, a being unknown to them, but girded with the power of mysteries and miracles. . . . On the hill above them, the lights in the house-with-the-iron-roof blinked for a moment and then went out.

Slowly the village roused itself, and where there

had been silence before, now a murmuring of many voices arose on the night, and a dark procession began to climb the hill toward the great house where the missionaries were slumbering. They made no sound climbing the hill, but talked together in murmurs for the silence of the house-with-the-iron-roof, in the light of the event that was about to happen, filled them with a sense of curious awe and expectancy. They sat on the ground, near the entrance to the house, and the tall, rank grass rose as high as their heads so that they had to push it aside in order to peer through the shadows. The tall trees sighed and murmured together as the long night hours drifted by, and still the silent people sat hidden by the tall grass and waited. For they had heard the words of the fat man very distinctly, and the man who had suspected that they might be witches had stood by, nodding his head and listening. Jesus, the Son of God, was surely coming. They sat on in silence, and some, overcome with drowsiness, dropped off into slumber. Others murmured together, in voices edged with anger, for the missionaries had called them witches. And the missionaries had told them that the Son of God was coming. If the missionaries lied in one thing they lied in all things, and they shook their heads and murmured angrily. . . .

When the sun rose only a few were left sitting in the tall grass and waiting. The missionaries were not yet awake but from the cook-shack back of the hut-with-the-iron-roof a column of thin smoke rose straight up into the clear morning air. They stared

at the house with its great holes in the wall, its gleaming roof, and shook their heads. Then they, too, walked back down the hill to the village. . . .

They never came up the hill again, and the hut-with-the-iron-roof and the holes in the wall, the house of hymns and hallelujahs, still stands on the hillside, silent, crumbling, deserted.

The manly art of self-defense the missionaries held to be a good thing. It was a practice encouraged in all civilized countries, and for excellent reasons. It acted like a safety valve for pugnacious instincts. It brought that all too human instinct to do damage to your neighbor within the bounds of civilized living. It afforded masses of people the vicarious thrill of seeing someone's else nose bloodied. It gave them the pleasure of betting on the champion, yelling their triumph and hissing the inadequate and biased justice of the referee; thus throwing off the accumulated indignations of civilized living with a minimum of danger to life and limb.

It has been observed that the missionaries are not always very clever people. They have a purpose, which, on examination, is a rather curious purpose. It is to induce people unlike themselves to think and believe as they do. This is a little bit like trying to make an elephant act and behave like a hyena. Few of them realize that the black man has a psychology of his own in religious matters. No new truth can be brought home to him until it has been made a part of his experience.

And so it was with boxing. It seemed to the missionaries the most natural thing in the world that if the natives could only learn to poke each other with padded fists, they would be much less likely to run

around poking each other with spears. A spear goes into a man quite easily, but when you hit a head with your fist you are quite likely to feel it yourself. There were too many local brawls and jealousies. It was entirely too natural for the young bucks with only one wife to spear any likely enough rival, and then get hanged for it by the *Boma* people. And why not improve on *Boma* methods? In time, the missionaries hoped they could have regular boxing tournaments on raised platforms, and then instead of waylaying each other in the bush the tribes would send their boxing champions at stated intervals to work off the accumulated heat of tribal indignations in a manly and civilized fashion. It seemed quite reasonable, when you came to think it over. The casualties from inter-village fights ran into neat figures annually.

At the outset, of course, the missionaries made one mistake in their calculations which was, perhaps, excusable. Being God-fearing men, they had also inherited a fear of death, the accumulated heritage of civilized living. Naturally, they assumed that the natives also feared death. It would have been more accurate to state that they distrusted and disliked it, as anyone dislikes a change between one state of permanency and another. But the white man's fear of death and his terror of inflicting it on others, is unknown to them. If you take a man's life, you merely change his form or shape. His essence remains the same, and if he is your enemy he is likely to become even more dangerous after death than when he stood before you in a form you could recognize. In the same

way, if a man kills you your chances of getting back at him are greatly enhanced unless he makes due and proper restitution to your relatives.

So it was with the best possible intentions that the missionaries announced in the village one day that they were going to introduce a new war game, a novel and amusing ritual. For the purposes of demonstration, they had selected two young men, both well developed and husky. There would be, so they said, no war dancing, no demonstrations with bows and arrows or spears. The people should come unarmed and watch the fun. They all came but the women, who were told that this was a man's affair pure and simple.

The action that followed was brief and vivid. The two young men, coached beforehand, stepped into the circle with the eight-ounce gloves protecting their hands. There followed an interval of awkward sparring. Then the two men stopped to think it over. They had consented in the first place to play this curious game because the missionaries had given them beads and calico. That was all right up to a point, but now matters were growing confusing. Neither one of them had done the other a harm. Neither one had insulted the other. And now the missionaries were getting excited and hopping around on their toes, yelling. The natives, gathered in the circle, stared at them distrustfully, and stared at the awkward spectacle in the center without apparent amusement. The smaller of the two missionaries danced into the ring in his tennis shoes and shorts, looking like a plucked bantam, and began shouting at the champions. One

of them slugged the other suddenly, and he fell flat on his face. The missionary, delighted, bent over and began to give the count in a professional manner.

He counted five, and suddenly the man jumped to his feet and dashed out of the circle. The missionary started after him. The champion remained in the center of the circle, smiling, at ease and triumphant. He bent his head to unknot the strings of the gloves with his teeth. There was a commotion on the outside of the ring, and another yell from the missionary, this time in a voice of despair and warning. There was a glint of a spear blade in the sunshine, and the champion fell forward on his face, wriggled once or twice, and lay motionless.

This put an end to boxing.

III

THE LOGIC OF WITCHCRAFT

THE LOGIC OF WITCHCRAFT

If the mental processes of the black man of Africa seem absurd to his light-skinned brother, the white man's logic is always confused and obscure to the native.

It is not altogether correct to say that the black man reasons as a child would reason. His mental processes, often simple as those of a child, are inevitably complicated by the *tabus,* superstitions and traditional forms, the accumulation of his heritage.

To him even the moral assumptions of the white man are rather topsy-turvy. His great rule in life is a flat contradiction of one of our major tenets. He says: "Thou shalt not speak the truth." And he lies, as he will explain, not to deceive you, but to mislead those malicious spirits who are continually laying in wait to take advantage of him. You may or may not, therefore, get an answer to even the most casual question. If you ask a Chiwahli man: "Have you seen elephants in the veldt today?" he will probably reply: "It's a long way to go." And you must not be puzzled at such a vague answer. An adverse spirit might be listening who, out of pure spite, would take it into his head to chase the elephants away. So he says: "It's a long way to go," and the spirit, overhearing this, would, of course, be discouraged before he started.

In reasoning, the black man accepts the surface

appearance or promise of things and if he inquires beneath the surface at all adopts the simplest ready-made explanation. His belief in the presence of spirits around him is part of the atmosphere he breathes and hence unshakeable. That which cannot be explained in any other way, can always be accounted for by "medicine" or magic. It is the white man's medicine which makes the automobile go—for he has observed how often the white man has to pour fluid into it— It is magic which spits out flame and death from the firestick.

And his belief in witchcraft is arrived at via the same mental process: namely that certain things occur which cannot be accounted for in any other way. To try to shake him out of this state of mind by our own logic is far more difficult than it appears on the surface. Our own categories of natural causes and effects are far too complicated for him and far too obscure. To him, for example, the germ theory of disease would sound monstrous and grotesque, whereas death by black magic often satisfies the requirements of any given situation.

The spirits which surround him from birth to death have laws of their own, though these are recondite and known only to the witch-doctors and practitioners of the black arts.

And this knowledge implies also control and power, mostly for evil and seldom for good, over the lives and destinies of men and of women.

THE CRIME OF CHISENGA

Well below the village of Kafuula, on the banks of the Lusenfwa River, a larger cluster of grass-thatched *shambas,* surrounded by extensive gardens, lies scattered over a low plateau that rises clear of the swamps and canebrakes formed when the river floods, toward the end of the rainy season.

This cluster of huts, a somewhat extensive village, still bears the name of Chisenga. And though her end was as evil as her life had been, it still harbors her memory without resentment.

For Chisenga was a witch as well as an ex-Queen, and it is a well-known fact in these regions that witches are born as well as made. The records, indeed, do not reveal at what point of her life Chisenga became a practitioner of the black arts, for she was already an old woman at the time of her encounter with Kayumbu, and had long outlived even the memory of her early and original misdeeds. And if her husbands—for as a Queen she was entitled to special dispensation in matrimonial matters—had any special knowledge as to when her activities in the evil arts had first begun, they took their secrets with them. For their lives, in many instances, were as lamentably short as Chisenga's love of change and adventure was long, living on, indeed, after the age when other women are inclined to view love as a lost art and its

satisfaction as an evil peculiar to the Younger Generation.

Rumor, however, always active in the lives of royalty, in Rhodesia, as elsewhere, had frequently hinted that the death-rate in Chisenga's family belonged as much in the realm of miracles as of nature; but rumor never ventured as far as an open accusation. For the old Queen's grip on the imaginations of her people was only equalled by the active despotism of a judicial system in which flaying alive figured as a major punishment, and the removal of such personal superfluities as the eyes, ears, nose, lips or hands as among the lighter and more tactful methods of insuring law and order. That she was in active and continual communication with evil spirits, was well known, and that she could command these spirits at will was taken for granted. . . .

And even today in the village of Chisenga black mothers have only to murmur the name of the old Queen to induce in their infants a commendable obedience by day, and by night as many nightmares as can possibly crowd through a small imagination.

. . . . . .

It has been remarked that Chisenga's concern with the tender passions survived not only the lamentable deaths of her husbands but also her own youth. It was, perhaps, natural, therefore, that as she grew older, her husbands, succeeding each other, should grow younger, and at the time of her first meeting with Kayumbu her royal bed and board was shared by two young men from the best families of the village.

But when she first set eyes on Kayumbu their charms faded as though they had never existed. For in Kayumbu the passion of her lifetime seems to have been given corporeal expression.

His origins are somewhat obscure, but he appears to have been a native of the village of Chipanga-Panga, who, following his profession as goatherd and the roving disposition natural to his years had settled for a while in the village of Chisenga. It is natural to assume that he was handsome, and from his subsequent conduct it is easy to deduce that he was brave.

Chisenga had never been an attractive woman, even in the bloom of her youth, and now, in the autumn of her life, she was rather more remarkable looking than beautiful. Wrinkles had furrowed her cheeks, and they had fallen in with too much brooding. Her hair had dropped off in patches, and her eyes, deep-set in their hollows, were small and red. Still, Chisenga's word was law and people knowing the double power of her black arts and of her lawful rights as head of the tribe, trembled before her. Husbands had come at her bidding, even if, in some instances, there had been a passing hint of reluctance in the face of the amazing turnover in Chisenga's matrimonial relations. And her astonishment on meeting with a flat refusal from the handsome young foreigner and bachelor, Kayumbu, was only exceeded by her rage.

To all of her advances he remained adamant. To her hints and approaches he showed a front of scorn. She had expected him to be flattered, as became a young man to whom the favors of a Queen are offered.

He showed her instead contempt. And for the first time in her life, Chisenga whose word was law, found herself seeking a favor.

It was a bitter pill for one who had grown old in the habit of command to swallow, but swallow it she did, and pleaded with the handsome young bachelor, Kayumbu. She offered him bribes and inducements. She would build a hut for him the like of which had never before been seen in the village of Chisenga, much less in his own village of Chipanga-Panga, and he would sit in the sun, grow fat and sleek, and walk down comfortable ways for the rest of his life. She even hinted darkly that her present husbands had not been in the best of health lately, and mentioned the possibility of their speedy demise as an added inducement. He drew himself up in the pride of his youth and looked at her as he would have looked on any other old and wrinkled woman, on a shrewish mother-in-law for example, and turning on his heel, walked off.

. . . . . .

If Chisenga had accepted this graceless refusal graciously, she would have been somewhat more than human. If she had followed her first inclinations and ordered the removal of various parts of Kayumbu's body as a preliminary to his death, it might have involved her in difficulties with the village of Chipanga-Panga, of which he was a native. The tactics she adopted under the circumstances showed both shrewdness as well as appreciation of the finer arts of vengeance and an amount of creative imagination suffi-

cient to place her in the front ranks of women criminals the world over.

She called Kayumbu to her hut for one final interview and argued with him. She stood under the eaves of the thatch, a shrivelled, repellent figure, wrapped in the folds of a blanket, backed by an array of her retainers. Her two husbands, lingering in the background, stood on one foot and then on the other, and tried to look unconcerned. The handsome young bachelor stood before her, erect and defiant, and she spoke harshly.

She pointed out that his refusal, under the circumstances, was tantamount to suicide, for she had at her disposal any number of evil charms to be used against him. The spirits of her dead husbands had entered the bodies of lions, as was appropriate to the rank to which marriage with her had elevated them, and as she had ruled them during their lifetime, so, even now, she controlled them in death. It would be the easiest part of the fate she had in store for him should she call them in from the veldt and order them to devour Kayumbu. Chiwahli's account does not reveal the full extent of the threats and inducements she made use of on this occasion, but it is known that Kayumbu left her hut with his determination unshaken, and his peace of mind lost for some time to come.

That night Kayumbu lay down to sleep in the dilapidated and abandoned hut he had occupied since he had come to the village of Chisenga. He had succeeded during the late afternoon and evening in shaking off some of the worst fears that Chisenga's threats had

inspired in him, and still sleep, for the first part of the night, was a stranger to him. For though he was a foreigner from the village of Chipanga-Panga, the fame of the old woman had spread through the entire neighborhood. He had been brought up from boyhood in fear and terror of Chisenga and her incantations and when, about midnight, he was awakened from a fitful doze by a sound of scratching and ripping around the entrance of his hut, he jumped from his bed with the conviction that his doom was sealed.

For there was no mistaking the sounds at the flimsy wicker screen that hung over his doorway; they were sounds made by the claws of wild beasts, and there was utterly no mistaking the low, subdued growls and snarls of the marauders, for these were the voices of lions. Chisenga had fulfilled her threat, and summoned her dead brothers, who, as chiefs, had been reincarnated in lions, in from the veldt to devour him, and he stood in the center of his hut, in the darkness, shaking in every limb and unable to use those limbs in any way, either for flight or for resistance. How long he stood there, whether for moments or hours, he had no way of telling, for time seemed to stand still and consciousness almost deserted him. To call out for help and waken the village never occurred to him; and when after more scratching and growling at the door of the hut the lions finally departed, he dropped back on his bed and lay there numb and shaken. He was convinced that his doom had merely been postponed, that Chisenga had determined

to frighten him first and have him killed and devoured afterwards, and with the first pale ray of daylight that stole into the hut the next morning, he rose and crept out of the village.

He could not run away, for Chisenga's power would reach out and find him wherever he was. Under the circumstances there was only one power that could avail to save him. He ran to the white man whose *safari* was encamped nearby and he recited his fantastic and incredible story.

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The tale amused the white man, and interested him more than it amused him.

He had heard in one way or another much about Chisenga's doings and her power for evil. And Kayumbu's tale of the lions was a little too good to be true.

Being a bold as well as a curious person, he therefore determined to investigate this new evidence of criminal activity on the part of Chisenga in person. He appeared in her village late in the afternoon together with the frightened but obstinate Kayumbu. He sent Kayumbu to his hut to pass the night, and after dusk crept into the village as noiselessly as possible and entered the same hut to pass the night in watching.

He ordered Kayumbu to stretch out on his bed as usual, and then found his way to the extreme rear of the hut, and sat down directly opposite the doorway with his rifle, cocked, on his knees, and awaited developments. He felt fairly safe in doing this. He

suspected that Kayumbu's fears were largely nightmares. He knew that with the natives suggestion was as powerful a force as physical violence. He had heard of and witnessed deaths that had been brought about by the prophecies of witch-doctors. He knew that if a native were told authoritatively by someone presumed to have power in these matters, that on a certain day he would die, he would begin to sicken at the appointed hour or crawl out on the veldt to await certain death. It did not seem to him in the least extraordinary, therefore, that if Chisenga had put the fear of lions into Kayumbu's mind he should dream them into existence.

Moreover he had never heard of lions entering a village and trying to break into a hut, except in the rare instance of man-eaters or of some beast driven mad by hunger, and Kayumbu's hut was well toward the center of the village. The beast or beasts would have to pass by the doors of several huts to reach it, and it seemed slightly absurd that if they had singled Kayumbu out for attentions once they should repeat the performance another time . . . He was to see that the absurd, and, indeed, the incredible, occasionally happens. Shortly before dawn he was awakened from a light doze by the unmistakable low breathing and snarling of lions outside the door. He was awakened to find Kayumbu standing erect in his bed, pressed against the wall in his panic. And utterly without knowledge of what he was doing, in automatic response to the jolt of his awakening, his finger pressed

the trigger of his gun and he fired. The bullet sailed harmlessly through the thatch of the roof. And the alarmed village woke from its early morning slumber to find a white man in his shirt sleeves, staring at the spoor and tracks of some large beast outside the hut of Kayumbu and quite unmistakably swearing.

For there on the ground around the hut, glowing a little in the white light of the moon that stood high in the dawn sky, was a thin scattering of fine, white powder, a powder evidently ground from the leaves of some herb. And this thin layer of powder, as all could see, led from Kayumbu's hut through the village, straight out into the veldt. And it was along this trail of powder that the footsteps of the lions had left an unmistakable impression in the soft, moist earth.

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Chisenga may have felt that the white man's display of interest in the fate of Kayumbu warranted the exercise of some discretion on her part. She changed her tactics and changed them abruptly.

She called Kayumbu to her hut the next morning and spoke to him in a wheedling voice. He had seen her power. She had not desired to harm him, but merely to demonstrate what was bound to happen should he persist in his refusal. She had sent the spirits of her dead husbands to his hut twice, but had given strict instructions not to devour him. Had she so desired, they would have torn him, and the white man as well, limb from limb. Kayumbu stood before her shaken, bewildered but obstinate. He refused to

speak, and left her storming with rage and muttering. Three days later, while watching over a herd of goats at pasture in the veldt, Kayumbu was attacked by a lioness.

He had driven the small beasts out from the village early in the morning, as was his custom, and toward noon, the sun being hot, and the goats showing no disposition to stray, he had stretched out in the shade of a bush for a short nap. He was awakened by a commotion in the herd. They were huddled close together as though for protection, and suddenly the leader bolted and the rest took to their heels after him.

Kayumbu, left alone with his apprehensions, managed to gather his wits sufficiently to see what had happened. The lioness stood where the herd had been grazing, lashing her tail and growling. Since she showed no disposition to follow the goats, Kayumbu drew the justifiable conclusion that she had come for him. He was armed with an old blunderbuss loaded to the muzzle with lead slugs and old nails. His teeth were chattering, but he managed to ask in a loud voice, three times, as the law of his tribe required him: *"Nanoo-yu-incalamo?"* ("Who are you, lion?") Then when the lioness made no reply but only moved her tail slowly and kept on advancing, he raised the blunderbuss to his shoulder and fired, and since it was almost impossible to miss his mark at such a short range, the lioness dropped dead.

Kayumbu was delighted, thinking that the spell of Chisenga had finally been broken. He ran after the departed herd and found it grazing peacefully a

short distance away. Driving the goats ahead of him, he started back toward the village.

He had only gone a short way, when he saw a crowd coming out to meet him, for the shot had been overheard and the owners of the goats were filled with apprehension. Kayumbu was jubilant and boasted about his desperate adventure with a lioness. When they crowded around him shaking their heads and murmuring, he slapped himself on the chest and strutted a little. He, Kayumbu, alone and single-handed, had killed a lioness. When they refused to believe him, he led them back across the veldt to where the carcass lay in the tall grass with the flies buzzing around it in swarms. They left the carcass in the veldt and carried the skin back to the village.

. . . . . .

Kayumbu lay down to sleep in his hut that night more at peace with the world than at any time since Chisenga's original proposal of marriage. He had the assurance of the white man's protection. He had, himself, and single-handed, exploded the power of Chisenga's incantations with a blunderbuss. He had seen that her power over spirits of the departed was subject to check. As to her more worldly powers—as instanced in her threat to flay him alive or burn him slowly before his own eyes—he knew she would not presume too far in the face of the white man's warning presence.

He was all the more unprepared for the happenings of the night since his fears were silenced and his confidence restored, and when he was aroused after some

hours of slumber by a sound at the door of his hut, it was to sit bolt upright in his bed with a clutch at his heart that almost caused it to stop beating. Still, he was able to reach for the blunderbuss under his bed with a hand that trembled and shook. . . . He sat with his eyes strained through the darkness for a long time, and nothing happened. He had half expected a return of the beasts from the veldt along the trail of one of Chisenga's magic powders, but the sound that had been made was too slight for a lion—a bare rustling of the mat screen that hung in front of his door. He caught his breath to listen for the unmistakable growls and snarls, but there were no growls, and no padding of lion's feet on the hard clay outside the hut. And he was about to drop back on his bed and doze off again, when the same sound, the same vague rustling, as though the screen before his door were being drawn aside, brought him up again sharply.

He fired without knowing what he was doing, for suddenly between the rushes of the screen before his door, the shadowy head and shoulders of a lioness was projected by the haze of moonlight outside. He heard a moan that sounded more human than animal. The head and shoulders of the beast disappeared, and he rushed for the door of the hut . . . There, in the moonlight, he had the extraordinary vision of a lioness, erect on her hind legs, staggering and stumbling off toward the veldt. In the confusion that followed he gave up all thought of pursuit. But a trail of blood lay on the moist clay between the huts where a few

nights before had been a trail of glistening white powder.

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It was early the following morning when one of the husbands of Chisenga appeared before the entrance of the white man's tent and asked to see him at once. He had a story to tell that was curious and slightly mixed. Chisenga had injured herself with a sharp spear, he said, and needed medicine and bandages at once. The white man, aroused from his early morning slumber, and a little tired of the whole affair of Chisenga, replied that if she wanted any patch-work done she could come to him herself.

But Chisenga was too badly injured to come, and in the end the white man was driven by curiosity to go to the village. He arrived shortly before noon. The fields as he entered were deserted, the smith's fire had gone out, his tools lay in a pile, the people were gathered together in the center of the village and an excited hubbub was everywhere. Chisenga had breathed her last an hour ago. The lioness that Kayumbu had shot in the veldt the day before had come back to his hut after nightfall, evidently seeking vengeance. Kayumbu had shot the lioness again, and now Chisenga had died. And speculation was rife. Some said that Chisenga had assumed the form of the lioness in order to punish Kayumbu. Others said that it was a mere instance of what they had known all along: namely that whatever rules applied to ordinary mortals did not apply to a witch like Chisenga. And in dying it was supposed

that she had found it convenient to transfer her spirit to some other form for the time being and might be expected back in her own flesh probably when everyone least expected it.

But the white man drew his own conclusions and if they were the most accurate they were by all odds also the most remarkable. For in a corner of Chisenga's hut, he found the pelt of a lioness, and this he took back with him to his tent for examination. It had been shot through twice with slugs and nails from a blunderbuss, just as anyone might have suspected from the circumstantial evidence in the case. In one place where it had been torn, the hide was thickly encrusted with dried blood.

There was no doubt in his mind but that Chisenga had accepted the challenge of the obstinate Kayumbu and put on the skin of the lioness in a last attempt to frighten him out of his wits. That was the first conclusion he drew, and it was not until sometime later that the full implications of the case dawned on him and his respect for Chisenga's imaginative powers rose accordingly. For then it was found that the claws had been sharpened to needle points on a stone.

So Chisenga had determined to claw the innocent but obstinate Kayumbu while he slept on his bed. Awakening, he would see all his fears and terrors suddenly take shape in the form of the lioness he had shot on the veldt that afternoon. She must have counted on his fear holding him rigid to his bed. And the villagers next morning would point to the scratches and wounds on the young man as further evidence of

the terrible powers of Chisenga and the folly of Kayumbu.

But the young man himself would never have lived to tell the tale of it. For the claws that had been sharpened to needle points were smeared with a deadly poison.

THE QUARREL

Blood-brothers and members of the peaceful community of Kafuula, Mutwale and Medoka had quarreled. It started over a simple enough argument in this fashion.

Said Mutwale to Medoka:

"Chimbakuma has a lot of dried caterpillars to eat. They are in his hut. Go to his hut and ask him, and he will give you caterpillars."

Said Medoka:

"How do you know that Chimbakuma has dried caterpillars to eat?"

Said Mutwale stoutly:

"I know that Chimbakuma has dried caterpillars in his hut, for if he hasn't, he ought to have."

Medoka stared at him a full moment before replying with a good deal of irony:

"That is the answer one might expect from someone who is nothing but cow dung."

Mutwale's hands went up, but he did not strike. Instead he folded his arms on his breast. He had been called a name. He would accept that name. He said:

"Am I cow dung? Very well. So I am, so I am, so I am!"

When a native is called a name by another native or a white man, he accepts that name just as he might accept a pair of shoes or an ornament, and if the name

does not happen to be ornamental, still it has been given to him, it is his property, and he must take it.

Thereafter, for a period of six months, Mutwale was known in the village as Cow Dung. Even to a stranger who might ask who he was, he said: "I am Cow Dung." It was not a handsome name, but after all, like any other inferior gift, it reflected more discredit on the donor than the recipient. For people would ask Mutwale, "Who gave you that name?" And when Mutwale said, "Medoka gave it to me," people would think: "What kind of a man must Medoka be to give so bad a name?" And they would shake their heads, thinking of Medoka. Really, they would think, he is a strange man who would give someone such a bad name. It is like giving poisoned chickens to your mother-in-law. And all this began to prey on Medoka's mind.

It was all very well to quarrel with a man and call him a name. The offence had been Mutwale's in the first place, although a good many moons having risen and set in the meantime, he had forgotten how the quarrel had started or what it was about. Still, he felt he was the aggrieved party. And now people were beginning to shake their heads at him as though he had been the offender. Not only that, but they pointed him out as a giver of bad gifts. And even his family were beginning to look askance at him, for was he not one of them, they said, and did not a discreditable act reflect on one and all?

And there were other and graver considerations. Supposing Mutwale were to die? Well, here was a

serious matter for Medoka. He had called Mutwale Cow Dung. Now, anyone looking at Mutwale could see that he was not cow dung at all. Therefore he had lied about Mutwale, and while Mutwale in the flesh made no attempt to harm him, if he died, his spirit might take a terrible vengeance for the lie. And the longer Mutwale kept the name, the larger the lie became. It rose like a black cloud in Medoka's mind and blotted out the very sunshine of existence.

It rose to such overwhelming proportions the more he thought of it and brooded about it, that Medoka's spirits began to droop and his health to fail. Before the awful quarrel he had been stout and cheerful and people liked to talk to him because he had stories to tell. Now they turned their backs on him when they saw him coming, and he had no one to talk to. Even his wives turned their heads away from him when he came into their hut. He couldn't spend all of his day in his little field working, because the field was not large enough and he didn't like to work. So he sat in front of his tent, smoked his calabash, and brooded. He felt a terrible depression stealing over him, and the thought came to him that perhaps he was going to die. Mutwale often passed by the hut and saw him sitting there, and Mutwale was fat and shiny. Whenever he saw Medoka sitting there, he strutted and threw out his stomach, for he was prospering even though he was known as Cow Dung. . . .

One morning, after a sleepless night in the hut, Medoka rose early. He took from the corner his spears and his bow and hung a full quiver of arrows

around his shoulder. The village was still asleep when he pushed back the mat of reeds that hung before the round door of his hut and stepped out into the gray dawn. He walked quietly between the houses so that no one might awaken and see him. A heavy dew lay everywhere, on the leaves of low bushes and the hummocks of grass between, and from the distant river a white mist was rising. His feet padded without a sound along the narrow, trodden trail. He climbed a hill, and now the veldt opened up before him, a vague immensity of prairie, with here and there a low brown hill, like a lone roller in a wide and desolate ocean. The sky to the east was already aquiver with the first faint glow of dawn, and when he had breasted the second hill, it broke into crimson flame. He stood there for a moment to watch the sun rise. . . .

When he returned to the village that night, three of his arrows were gone, and he staggered under the burden of a small tawny water buck slung across his shoulder. People turned around to stare at him, for it had been many moons since Medoka had had the courage to go hunting, and there he was returning with a kill. His wives, to whom the good news of fresh meat had already been brought, waited at his hut door, chattering, but Medoka passed them by without a word or a glance and strode on to look for Cow Dung, who sat on the ground before his hut, with his wives near by, eating his dinner of mealie-flour, with a sauce made of chopped caterpillars.

Medoka dropped his burden and stood erect, while

the curious and the idle pressed around to watch and listen. Many moons ago, Medoka said, he had given him, Mutwale, a name; the name of Cow Dung. And now he wanted to take that name back again. Naturally, he did not suppose that Cow Dung would give back the name for nothing. So today he had been in the veldt and had shot a water buck. And Cow Dung could see for himself that it was young and tender.

Cow Dung looked scornfully, first at the buck and then at Medoka, but his wives eyed the fresh meat eagerly. Mutwale began his harangue again: "Wasn't the taste of fresh meat sweeter than the name of Cow Dung? It had been a bad gift in the first place, and here he was ready to buy it back with a good gift, new meat, fresh and tender. He looked at the wives of Cow Dung as he spoke, and they began to poke Cow Dung and to chatter. He shook his head, but they chattered more loudly. When he shook his head a second time, their voices rose angrily, and Cow Dung stared at his enemy helplessly. He knew the revenge of angry women. He stared from the water buck to Medoka, and in no very friendly fashion, he shrugged. . . .

That evening Mutwale and his family feasted, and his wives' mothers and fathers and brothers received tender pieces of fresh-killed meat. Medoka went home to his angry wives, who had seen the meat but who had not so much as tasted it. And that night he slept very soundly.

DANGER OF LEAVING YOUR SOUL IN A CALABASH

As head boy with the *safari,* Wambue's duties were many and onerous. He saw to it that all the porters carried their proper loads, fifty pounds each. He saw that they were aroused in the morning for the start of the march, hours before the sun has risen to scorch the trails like a burning glass. He distributed the rations, transmitted the white man's orders, listened to quarrels, enforced discipline, reported shirking and idling. He was the back bone of the *safari,* as a first sergeant is the backbone of a company in a regiment.

Such duties as these Wambue fulfilled with alacrity and efficiency. He was a cheerful and willing worker. His shrill voice in the morning stirred the knots of porters from their slumbers and drove them grumbling and chattering to their feet while the moonlight lay on the veldt like the light of a false dawn. With the white men he was cheerful and friendly, studying their ways and gestures with curious eyes, opening the inner soul of his fears and forebodings to them, with a child's confidence in the dispensations of a parent.

And one day while we were making a short stay in the village of Chiwefwe, in the Irumi Mountains, he came to my tent, stricken and in great agitation. He wanted to explain that he would not be able to get the *safari* ready in the morning. I stared at him

in amazement. His eyeballs were rolling, his teeth chattered as he stammered out the words. An accident, a terrible thing had befallen him! It concerned his goat. His terror seemed almost ludicrous. Wambue the cheerful, the alert, the invaluable headboy was beside himself with fear. In brief, he was going to die.

I repeated his words . . . "going to die." He nodded. There was no question about it. His stricken eyes wandered from my face to the ground. There was no use in trying to avoid his fate. His fate was, in some mysterious fashion, wrapped up with the fate of his goat. He was going to die because his goat had wandered off into the veldt and had been devoured by a leopard. And what was I to do?

. . . . . .

Here to the observer of native life and customs was a mystery of the first order. Wambue could not speak about this thing, he could only shake his head. What possible connection could there be between the straying and death of Wambue's goat, and his own imminent death? Witchcraft, no doubt, but what one of the infinite variety that hangs over the head of the native Rhodesian like a doom?

A few hours before I had observed Wambue sitting with a group of the men of the village, gossiping in the most cheerful manner imaginable. I knew that he was pleased with the thought of a stay in the village of Chiwefwe, for this was one of the few villages where Wambue was without wives and mothers-in-law. Wambue's wives were always getting him into

hot water, and his mothers-in-law were always scolding him.

I knew also that Wambue was inordinately fond of his goat; that he tended and fed her as a mother might tend an amiable child. I knew that he never let the goat out of his sight. When he was away from his native village for a day, he always left her in his hut and placed mats before the door so that she might not stray. When he returned, he brought her grass which he had cut with care from the fresh patches near the water holes. At night, he kept her by a cord which he tied to his wrist. In brief, Wambue's devotion to his goat was nothing short of remarkable, having in it something of the protective fondness of an elderly husband for a young and wayward wife. So much so that the wags in Wambue's village were inclined to shake their heads and smirk over it.

But nothing of this could account for the present state of Wambue's agitation. His expression was not so much one of grief as of fear; and not so much of fear as of an awful, a hideous certainty. His shoulders sagged, his eyes sought the ground with a fixed, lack-luster stare. I tried my puzzled best to comfort and reassure him. If his goat was gone, certainly there were other goats in the world, in the village. I could easily procure him another goat. He shook his head solemnly, without raising his eyes from the ground or changing a muscle of his lax and hopeless posture. He did not want another goat, *for that goat had his soul.* And now that goat had been devoured by a leopard. His soul was lost beyond any possibil-

ity of recovery. Therefore Wambue was going to die.

To anyone unacquainted with savage processes of thought Wambue's predicament could only appeal as ridiculous. To anyone else it might seem either startling or tragic, depending on his insight into the primitive mind.

I could offer words of comfort. I could try to cheer him up. I did not see as yet the connection between Wambue's goat and his soul, but I could scoff at his idea that death was only a matter of days and of hours for he was in the best of health. But what were words and promises from me in the face of a settled and abiding conviction?

For to Wambue, standing there before me and staring at the ground, matters were, after all, dreadfully simple. All men who lost their souls died, that was all. If any man whose soul had wandered off from him had survived there was no record of it, and no one would have believed such a story had it been told to him. For death to the savage is simply the permanent absence of the soul.

Now the soul is a delicate thing, and open to all sorts of dangers. It wanders away from the body at night engaging in various independent exploits in the form of dreams. If for any reason the soul is detained during its wanderings—as for example, when it meets with another soul and fights with it, or with a stronger soul that abducts it, and fails to return—the sleeper never awakens. A soul may quit the body during

waking hours, especially during periods of sickness. It may be taken out of the body by witch-doctors or persons practising black magic and be held, permanently, in captivity. In that case the man dies. Often enough, such persons will set traps for souls, and when they have caught them will hold them from the owner for a ransom. If on the other hand a person wants to protect his soul, he may go to a witch-doctor and have it placed in some more durable container than his body.

By day, when the sun shines, the soul lies visible at a man's feet in the form of his shadow, and he must be continually on his guard lest his shadow suffer injury. If someone were to stab or mutilate his shadow, he might die, for whatever his soul suffers, he suffers also. By day and by night, therefore, the soul stands in continual mortal danger, and its owner must be on his guard and watchful. And knowing these things, Wambue many moons before his present distress and anxiety, had taken unusual precautions. As fate would have it, it was these very precautions which precipitated the final disaster.

For Wambue had paid a witch-doctor to take his shadow, his soul, and mix it into some porridge. His motive in doing this was a simple one of self-preservation. He had enemies, chiefly among the porters who sulked when he roused them in the morning and muttered at him when he inspected their loads. He had many wives, and his mothers-in-law were always discontented. He had many duties to perform, and so could not be continually on his guard, watching his

shadow. Once inside the porridge and securely baked in by the fire, however, his soul was beyond injury. He put the porridge in a calabash and hid it in his hut. He had secured his soul beyond any possibility of straying or of danger from enemies. And one day his goat came into his hut, rummaged among Wambue's possessions, found the calabash and ate the porridge.

It had frightened him at first, but then, thinking matters over calmly, it had occurred to Wambue that things had not turned out so badly after all. His soul now resided in the goat's stomach. In some respects it was an even better abiding place than a calabash gourd. His soul had achieved, as it were, four legs and this solved difficulties of transportation. Moreover no enemy, no matter how imaginative, would think of looking for Wambue's soul in the stomach of a goat. He might plume himself that all had turned out for the best, but he must, of course, guard the goat as he guarded his own life.

And now his soul, his life, had been torn away from him. A leopard had devoured his goat. As long as his soul was in his goat he could guard it but now his soul was in the stomach of a treacherous and hostile beast, slinking through the shadows of the bush and jungle. It was lost to him beyond the remotest hope of recovery.

And so Wambue must die.

The *safari* that was to have started early the next morning had to be postponed. Without a head-boy we could not proceed, and Wambue's condition was

serious. All the next day he sat on the ground in front of my tent, and when night came he was too despondent to rise or move. The strength had flowed out of the smooth muscles of his body, and his arms and shoulders hung inert and helpless. The absurdity of it all was beyond calculation. He was as sound, physically, and as strong as he had been the day before. My words of comfort, even my attempts at ridicule, fell flat and hollow on my own ears. That was the effect of his sure and unalterable conviction on my own imagination. *He was going to die.* All men whose souls were lost to them died. His soul had been stolen away from him by a leopard. There was the logic of it, simple as daylight, yet dark in its way too—formidable like the shadow that the jungle throws across the veldt when the moon swims over the tree tops. I watched him day by day, and day by day he grew thinner and more helpless. He refused food altogether, drank a little water, and at night lay on his back staring with feverish eyes into the shadows that rested their whole terrible weight on his consciousness.

And one night, within that same week, he rose from the ground while I was sleeping and stole out like a thin ghost into the darkness. The veldt, rolling off like an infinite ocean in the moonlight, received him, and the village knew him no more.

A week later word was brought that Wambue's body had been found. It was lying on its face and the arms from which the hyenas had already stripped the flesh were flung out in a gesture of last despair.

Culture, property, the adornments of civilization, these things came to Juliasiyo incidentally. He had not sought out the white man's civilization through any zeal for self-improvement. His reason for leaving his native village was both simple and, in its way, profound. He wanted to escape from the vengeance of the spirit of a man he had cheated in a chicken deal.

If the man had not died, Juliasiyo might have stayed where he was. He was larger than Kasungaire and stronger. If Kasungaire, therefore, had detected his criminal maneuver, he still could have put him forcibly in the wrong. Moreover, his relatives were more numerous than Kasungaire's and more loud voiced. If Kasungaire had taken the matter to higher authority, to one of the elders or to Chiwahli himself, he, Juliasiyo, would have been ably supported. But Kasungaire's death put a vastly different complexion on matters.

No matter how small or puny Kasungaire might have been in the flesh, in the spirit he was more than a match for any man, and it behooved Juliasiyo to be on his guard. He might have gone to the witch-doctor and arranged to have traps set for Kasungaire's soul outside his hut, but Kasungaire's family would naturally have resented such a procedure. He might have appeased Kasungaire's spirit by building a small hut for it outside the village and putting some food and

tobacco in it, but in this case Kasungaire's relatives would have grown suspicious. For why, they would say, should Juliasiyo attempt to appease the spirit of *our* relative? Are there not enough dead in his own family to worry about? And they would shake their heads, thinking of these things. For, they would say, Juliasiyo would never do this unless he had done Kasungaire a wrong.

Whatever angle he considered the general situation from, it looked far from promising to Juliasiyo. He would have to be on his guard by night and day against the watchful, restless spirit of the man he had wronged. He sat down and thought for a long time about things. He even went and talked it over with Chimbakuma, who had had experience in these things himself, and Chimbakuma took the calabash out of his mouth and spat on the ground between the *shambas.* Chimbakuma shook his head. There was only one place that he knew of where a black man's spirit would never think of looking for Juliasiyo, and that was in a white man's settlement. Juliasiyo nodded. The advice seemed good. But before leaving he took certain precautions.

He got all his possessions in readiness the night before his departure and when his brother asked where he was going, he said:

"I am going on a hunt."

He said this loudly, so that Kasungaire's spirit would hear it.

The next day when another relative stopped him

as he was leaving the village and asked where he was going, he said loudly:

"I am going to Kafuula."

Thus Kasungaire's spirit was confused and thrown off the trail before Juliasiyo started. Juliasiyo went to the white man's town of Broken Hill, and there, since he was industrious, he prospered.

He worked as a houseboy and picked up fragments of speech. He also did the washing and picked up fragments of shirts, drawers and stockings. He spent much time in the refuse pile, outside the town, where was dumped such an assortment of old objects as would have gladdened an entire native village—tin cans, match boxes, rusty iron pots and bits of rag and flannel—enough to have made the dowry of a dozen brides. He was thrifty and stored up valuable objects such as keys of sardine cans, razor blades and safety pins, enough to win his way to any woman's heart, for he had in mind to take some wives and settle down on his return. He watched the moon rise and set many times, watched the rainy seasons pass and come again. He knew that a long time had elapsed, and that Kasungaire's spirit would be tired of looking for him. He saved six pounds in cash and was now ready to return, no longer *m'shenzi*—savage—but a civilized being, dressed appropriately for the part, a man of property, a person of circumstance and importance.

. . . . . .

When I first saw Juliasiyo, he was sitting beside the homeward trail, under the shade of a tree, with

two porters squatting humbly at his feet, as became their naked, uncivilized condition. He had a pith helmet on his head, with the crown broken in. This he removed as he bowed to the white man. I stopped. He presented a rather extraordinary sight sitting there amid his plunder of the refuse heap, and I asked him where he was going.

He said that he had been to the white man's town of Broken Hill and was now returning to his native village. I asked what he had been doing there. He looked surprised, slightly hurt. He pointed to the clothes he was wearing, the boxes at his feet. I could see for myself, couldn't I? He was smart, he had worked, he had prospered. I continued to stare at him in amazement. He was an extraordinary sight.

In addition to the pith helmet, he wore three shirts, the outer one of which was a mere collection of shreds held together by the collar and wrist bands. He wore a pair of brown shorts with a pair of long linen drawers dangling out of them. He wore three or four pairs of socks, the cloth of one pair hiding the holes in the pair below. He had one bright garter on one leg and on the other the remnant of a woman's red silk stocking. He wore shoes on his feet, one black and the other tan, and both quite innocent of soles. And beside him were two boxes, one running over with tin cans and other assorted debris and the other empty. I inquired about the empty one. It had contained his extra clothes. But approaching his native village, he had taken them out and put them on, for, as he himself put it:

"How would they know how many possessions I have unless I wore them? Their eyes cannot look into boxes."

It was very simple. Here as elsewhere one should not hide one's light under a bushel. As I walked off, he rose and removed the pith helmet again. He snarled at his unclothed, *m'shenzi* porters, the perfect imitation of a white man's snarl. I noticed that he carried a walking stick in one hand and a spear in the other. I stared after him as he made off down the trail.

And so Juliasiyo returned to his native village, a made man, proud in his possessions. He had outwitted the spirit of Kasungaire by disappearing for many moons to the white man's settlement, after announcing loudly that he was going to the village of Kafuula. He had many tin pots and pans and shreds of calico, and if his crime had been discovered, he could make restitution to Kasungaire's relatives. He had beads and safety pins and the keys of sardine cans, things that could be used for the adornment of any woman. He had six pounds in hard cash, two shoes without their soles, and a pith helmet with the crown broken in.

And when he walked into his native village, men would turn their heads, the women would stop grinding the corn and cover their mouths as they stared at him in wonder and admiration, and old Chimbakuma, smoking his pipe in peace, would stare at the ground and nod wisely.

THE GLASS EYE

The white man's magic is not limited to a control over the functions of external nature, as exemplified, for example, by his power to strike and kill at a distance with a noise like thunder. It extends as well to changes of state or being of the individual himself. It gives the white man control over physical functions in the highest degree miraculous.

White men can take their teeth out and put them back in their mouths again, although not all white men appear to be equally gifted in this fashion; or at least many of them are prone to hide their light under a bushel and go around as though their teeth were attached to their gums. White men (although this sounds exorbitant) have even been known to remove the hair of their heads at night, and place this hair on a convenient campstool or table. The skull then appears, white and hard and shiny, like the polished bones of a skeleton. They can take the hair up again and restore it to their domes without the aid of a spirit or even an incantation. And this, though few may credit it, is also a fact: that white men can remove an eye from its socket and restore it to its proper place and function without injury. And of such a man a whole village or a tribe may well stand in awe. . . .

My friend, H——, was such a man, and in a country where the laborer is not always worthy of his hire he had been able to work some wonders with his

extraordinary gift. He owned an orange ranch, and in the harvest season the young men of the village of Chiwefwe, and as many of the older men as were tempted by a daily wage of six pence, came to assist in the picking, the packing and crating. In the spring of the year, also, there was much work to be done, in repairing fences, in weeding the orchard, in hoeing and planting the vegetable garden. And with his one fixed and staring eye, and his other more restless eye that was slightly lighter in color, H—— was a capable overseer on his own preserves.

Moreover, since it was known that H—— had the miraculous power of detaching one eye from his face and restoring it, it was conceded that he had other powers as well, in reserve, and the work in his fields and orchards, therefore, was more efficiently despatched than was usual. But it was not felt that H——'s powers as a wonder-worker necessarily included an ability to reach out from any great distance. It was not, in other words, felt that when H—— went on a trek in the veldt, or even, for that matter, disappeared around a corner of the house, it was dangerous or other than quite natural to drop pick and spade, to stretch out on the warm ground, or to congregate in groups with one's friends and talk as many things over as possible.

. . . . . .

One morning a neighbor from a ranch three miles off rode over to urge H—— to join in a hunt with him. Fresh meat had been particularly scarce of late, as the grass was still high. He told an interesting

story of a herd of hartebeeste that had been sighted in the veldt not two miles distant.

It was tempting, H—— was a hunter, and he debated the matter seriously. He had started a new gang from the village of Chiwahli to work in the orchard that morning, and the only thing he had been able definitely to observe about this new gang was that it was a little lazier and slower than the old. And it was imperative to him that the work in the orchard be completed before nightfall.

He was an inventive person, given to quick bursts of inspiration, and the one that came to his rescue at this crisis appeared particularly brilliant. He asked his friend to wait, walked down to his orchard, and called his laborers together. He gathered them in a circle around him, and solemnly and with appropriate gestures, removed his glass eye from his face.

When this demonstration of his mysterious powers had caused a hush to fall upon them, he spoke. The words he uttered were weighty and he spoke in an impressive fashion.

He was going out on a hunt, he said, and he wanted the work in the orchard completed before his return. And in order to insure himself against any slackness on their part, he was going to leave his eye behind him to watch them. His eye would scrutinize every movement through the whole length and breadth of the orchard, and he would know, when he returned, just who to reward and who to punish. And with that H—— placed his glass eye high up in the crotch of a tree where it had a splendid view of the entire orchard, and departed satisfied.

He returned toward twilight with an excellent kill for the short hours he had spent in the open, and proceeded at once to the orchard. There was a stir and bustle at his approach, and a great effect of diligent and attentive labor as soon as he stepped under the darkening shadow of the trees. But over his glass eye that he had placed so carefully in such an advantageous position, the battered crown of an old straw hat had been carefully placed. And for the rest, the weeds seemed rather thicker than when he had set the men of Chiwahli to work on them in the morning. . . .

It was not until a few days later and only by persistent questioning that H—— finally discovered how simply and easily his glass-eye had been outwitted.

For the men of Chiwahli, as soon as he had gone out of the compound, had begun to ponder seriously over the situation as he had explained it to them. One thing was at once apparent; that though the glass eye could see, it could not hear. They could talk, therefore, as much as they liked, although they must in the meantime pretend to work industriously.

So they talked things over while they worked, and it was Mutwale, who had recently been known to the village as Cow Dung, but who had taken his former name back again on the insistence of the outlander, Medoka, who finally hit upon a bold but logical scheme for outwitting the glass eye.

Mutwale, it should be known, since his successful encounter with Medoka, had enjoyed a reputation in the village for a certain limited brilliance of intelli-

gence, and words from his mouth—words which, of course, the glass eye could not hear—were listened to with corresponding attentiveness. And the scheme he had hit upon did full justice to his reputation, for it included every possible contingency that might arise.

He spoke while his back was bent over his hoe, with his shoulders turned to the glass eye, and the others nodded as they listened to his words of wisdom. For there were two things, he pointed out, of paramount importance in the approach to the problem they were considering. If you put a patch over a man's eye, he said, that eye could not see, and the same thing applied, of course, to the glass eye in the tree-crotch. But a man with hands could take the patch away, whereas a glass eye was quite powerless to remove any barrier interposed along its line of vision. Once safely covered, the glass eye, indeed, would probably go to sleep, thinking that night had fallen. And all that transpired before it in its slumber would be but a dream, which it would report confusedly to its owner the white man. And in order to carry this plan out successfully, Mutwale recommended discretion and cunning.

For if anyone of them left off working, now, under the full surveillance of the glass eye, the eye would bring it to the attention of the white man, and the shirker would assuredly be punished. But let one of them, Mweri, for example, pretend to suffer from a violent stomach-ache, a cramp, or, better yet, let him pretend to be seized by a terrible thirst. Let him pant and hang his tongue out as he worked and then

let the rest of them gesture toward the stream of fresh water, and urge Mweri to relieve his thirst, for it is well known that a thirsty man is a bad worker. Let Mweri finally drop his hoe, and start off toward the house as though to relieve his thirst, but let him when he was half way to the house, turn and come back slowly and cautiously toward the orchard, always keeping the tree, in the crotch of which the glass eye was sitting, between himself and the eye. Let him remove the straw hat from his head, whose rim was battered but whose crown was intact, and let him carry this in his hand in full readiness as he walked. Let him with the utmost caution approach the tree, and then suddenly, as though he were snaring a bird with it, drop his hat over the glass eye in the crotch.

And all who listened to Mutwale nodded their heads admiringly, for he was said to be a clever fellow and here was tangible evidence of what had long been suspected. And it was agreed, when the glass eye was safely covered by Mweri, that Mutwale alone should be relieved from his turn at sentry duty at the edge of the orchard, to watch for the return of the white man. They all slept and chatted and smoked in turn, while the sun broke down through the interstices in the leafy roof above them, but Mutwale slept the longest and smoked the most, full knowing that anything the glass eye now saw, behind its cover, would be merely its dream and therefore not very reliable as evidence against him.

MUNDALIRA DOES HIS BEST

When the native wishes to indicate a direction or point out a guilty person, he never uses an index finger as we do. He says: "Go this way," or: "That is the man," pointing with his whole hand, the fingers outstretched and joined together, so that the tips touch. If you ask him why he does not point at an accused man with the index finger and thumb, he will tell you: "The man who points that way is more guilty than the man who has done the wrong, for two fingers only point at the man, and the other three point right back at you." On such foundations are the more elaborate structures of primitive logic erected.

Mundalira, the aged councillor of Chiwahli, explained this interesting point to me. He was fat, heavy and lazy. The best years of his life had been spent in sitting in the sunshine before his hut, and in his old age a peaceful lethargy had made him its own. Today the sun was hot, and we sat in the shade of the projecting eaves of Mundalira's *shamba,* while two lean hens and a lean black rooster pecked at the clean, baked surface of the ground between Mundalira's hut and the one in front of it. We sat on the ground and made the appropriate gestures of pointing. I showed him how the white man indicated an object by throwing out his hand with the index finger extended. He shook his head. This method, as I could readily see, was dangerous. Only the thumb

and index finger pointed away from me; the other three were twisted back. He demonstrated the better way of pointing, and I stretched out my hand, with the fingers extended and joined at the tips. He nodded approval. And then I suggested that I would like to photograph him, pointing first as the white man does and afterwards like a native. He hesitated for a moment, and then said it would "take a little time to practise it up." He seemed slightly uneasy at my suggestion.

I asked:

"Couldn't you do it now?"

He shook his head. He would have to think it over; have to study it a bit.

Perhaps he feared invoking an adverse spirit. . . . I went on:

"How long will it take before you are ready?"

He considered the matter gravely. It would be about two days before he was ready. He could do it then, all right, but it would take a lot of study. He shook his head. . . .

An hour later I passed by his hut and found him still sitting in the door, wearing a serious expression. I said:

"Are you studying?"

He glanced up with an expression I could not quite fathom.

"Studying what?"

"What you were to do for me."

He stared, the upper part of his body, projected from the rolls of fat below, swaying slightly, his eye-

balls rolling. His expression was immensely mysterious.

"Ah," he said. "Was I to do something for you? What was I to do for you?"

And that was as far as matters went.

THE PICKY-PICK

Blaiera belonged to the Ford car as its official starter. His duties were simple and he fulfilled them with zeal. Whenever the engine stopped, he cranked; whenever we passed a watering place on the road between Chiwefwe and Kashitu, he got out with a pail and filled the radiator. When we returned from a trip it was Blaiera's duty to see that the engine was clean and the body shining. He had a name for the car, "picky-pick," a convenient adaptation of the sound of the ancient engine.

Native curiosity seldom carries beyond the simplest conclusions to satisfy a given problem. If I had asked Blaiera what made the picky-pick go, he would have answered promptly, "The medicine." He knew that when the picky-pick stopped you had to pour medicine into it through a funnel. Then it would spit fire, rumble and go again. Also when it got thirsty, you gave it a drink from a bucket. You had to give it lots of drinks because it was an old picky-pick and the water ran out of it pretty fast.

Whenever we had engine trouble, Blaiera watched me crawling around in the dust under the picky-pick's legs with great curiosity. Plainly, I was doctoring it. Its insides got out of order, and then it needed doctoring, like a goat. Only, of course, the picky-pick was more complicated than a black man's goat since it be-

longed to a white man. He observed that my hands got black with grease and that I washed them off afterward with a little gasoline from the tank, drying them on a rag.

To Blaiera's thinking, black was white. When a native is clean he is black and shiny. Blaiera had seen dirty men in his village but they were grey, covered with ashes and dust and people called them, with scorn, "white negroes." So naturally he watched my cleaning operations with interest. If he had cleaned himself he would have turned blacker, but when I washed my hands they turned white or brown. Like many other things that the white man did, it was a reversal of the processes of nature. He watched me going to the tank, letting the gasoline flow out into a small tin, dipping my hands in, rubbing the grease off on a rag, and the more he watched the more he wondered.

One day, after a long trip through the dust and mud holes of the veldt, I entered the compound and parked the car outside my tent. Blaiera had instructions to clean the body and running gear carefully. He fetched a couple of pails full of water and went to work immediately. In about an hour he came running up to the tent with both of his arms badly burned. His expression was one of indignation, striving with pain and exasperation. It was my fault that he had been burned. I was amazed. I couldn't understand how he had burned his arms cleaning the car. But I proceeded to bandage his arms.

He repeated:

"Look, *Bwana,* what you have done. It is your fault."

His insistence was slightly annoying and the mystery was still unfathomed. I said:

"How is it my fault that you have burned your arms?"

"Didn't you tell me to clean the picky-pick?"

"Yes," I replied, "I told you to clean the picky-pick. But that wouldn't burn your arms. What happened?"

"Ah," he said, "when you cleaned the picky-pick didn't your arms get dirty?"

"Yes," I said, "but what has that to do with the burn?"

"When your hands got dirty didn't you clean them with the medicine that makes the picky-pick go?"

"Yes."

His face spoke his triumph. He had me cornered. And still the matter remained a mystery to me.

"Then isn't it your fault?"

This was irritating. I tied up the bandage and let his arm drop.

"Why is it my fault?" I asked exasperated.

"Well, when you washed your hands didn't you dry them on a cloth?"

"Yes," I said, "I did."

The train of his logic was so triumphantly complete.

"You gave me no cloth," he said, "so didn't I have to go to the fire to dry my arms?"

UNUSUAL USES FOR SOAP

Kosamu wanted soap. He was my personal boy and he was accustomed to asking for what he wanted.

There is nothing remarkable in a native wanting something and stating so explicitly. Unlike the white man, he does not make either too much or too little of his desires. He is not ashamed of them nor does he try to outwit his own nature by philosophizing about it. He entertains no illusions about altruism and his greed being more direct is less offensive. If he wants a thing and is not afraid of you, he will stretch out his hand like a child and say: "I want that." Then, if you can spare it, you will probably give it to him.

It was not, therefore, the request but merely Kosamu's manner of making it that was unusual. We had made camp after a long *safari,* the fires were lit, and night was falling. He stood outside the flap of my tent gesticulating and stammering. It was as though he wished to say that his life depended on the possession of a cake of soap. Not the kind he used for my laundry, but the pink kind with the nice smell that I used in bathing. Moreover he wanted a whole cake, a new cake in its neat tissue paper wrapper.

Kosamu had never asked for toilet soap before, and I hadn't the faintest notion what he would do with a cake of it when he got it. The idea of his washing himself with it was altogether too far-fetched and fantastic. So far as I knew, Kosamu never washed

himself with soap. If I had asked him why he didn't he might have been insulted. It would be implying that he was dirty. And quite obviously he wasn't dirty. His black body shone in the sun like a well-oiled boot. He dried himself when the rain fell on him and the dust of the *safari* fell off when he waded through a river. And he looked somewhat askance at my own nightly ablutions, probably more than convinced that I would end by rubbing my skin off.

For among Kosamu's other duties as personal boy was the nightly task of acting as shower bath or rain-maker after the march. This he did by collecting water in a variety of tins in front of my tent, heating some of them and keeping the others cool. After I had stripped and soaped myself, Kosamu, mounted on a soap box, would sprinkle water down upon me. He performed this task with gusto and yet with dignity since these scenes often took place outside the tent in the presence of witnesses. For the white man is still a curiosity and his strange ways are always well worth watching. When the final act of the ritual was performed and Kosamu had emptied the last can of cool water, he would descend from his elevation and pick up any scraps of soap that happened to be left over. This, I took as a mere example of the native habit of picking up everything the white man drops from sardine keys to soleless boots. It never occurred to me that Kosamu would devise in his head fantastic uses for a cake of soap—and now he wanted a whole one and wouldn't tell me what he was going to do with it.

The only thing that I could ascertain from him was that he did not want it for himself but for someone else—for a man who had followed us all day on our *safari* from the last village. So here was another puzzle. Did the man want to wash himself? No. Well, what did he want with a cake of soap? He had to have one. Why did this man who had followed us all day have to have a cake of soap? Because, he, Kosamu, had promised him one. I grew severe. Why had he, Kosamu, promised this man a cake of my toilet soap? Because he knew that if he asked me for a cake of soap I would gladly give it to him.

Here we were back at the point from where we had started. I knew that it would be useless to question Kosamu further. So I sent for the man to whom Kosamu had promised a cake of toilet soap and, by dint of threats, bribes and cajolery, divined the following story; illustrative not only of Kosamu's duplicity, but of a novel and altogether interesting use for a cake of soap.

We had stopped for several days at the village of Mumbreyla, where the man who had followed us during the long *safari* was a native. I had my tent pitched in the enclosed clearing outside the fringe of gardens and cultivated land. These clearings are reserved for the use of the passing white men and their porters and are kept free of bush and scrub to form convenient and comfortable camping grounds. Here the idle population of the village gathered day after day to watch the white man at his activities. It was

an audience composed in large measure of women.

In Rhodesia, where modesty is a matter of *tabu* and not of clothes, it is well to do as the Rhodesians do. If my modesty had overcome me, the whole village would have followed me into the bush to watch Kosamu produce cloud-bursts above me, during my evening wash-down. As it was, it behooved Kosamu and me to act our parts with as much graciousness as possible. I soaped carefully and Kosamu sprinkled me. The women sat on the ground outside the stockade with their hands over their mouths and their faces half averted to indicate reserve as well as curiosity. Kosamu, standing above me, watched the women benevolently, with an eye to the more showy gestures of his important office, until his attention was drawn one evening by a certain Wana-Ngosa, who sat in the center of the group. And he found it difficult, once having seen Wana-Ngosa, to take his eyes off her, so much so, that he became awkward in his movements and splashed more water on himself than on me.

Kosamu, in brief, was susceptible. He noticed that Wana-Ngosa looked at him out of the corner of her eyes. The wish often being father to the thought in such matters, he read in her glances a mixture of coyness and admiration. It added to the possibilities of the situation that Wana-Ngosa's husband was away in a distant village.

That evening, after he had put the implements of the bath away, and gathered up the small scraps of pink soap which happened to be left over from the ceremony, Kosamu paused for a moment to concen-

trate. He then dressed himself carefully in his best, a suit of B. V. D.'s that I had discarded, put a pair of old tennis shoes without any soles on his feet and proceeded to his conquest. He knew that the situation called for discretion. The lovely Wana-Ngosa was married and he could not approach a married woman directly, the more so since he was a stranger to the village. He therefore took the soap he had saved from the bath and went to Wana-Ngosa's aunt. He spoke to her eloquently of his passion for Wana-Ngosa and laid the soap before her. She sized the situation up rapidly. Kosamu was the white man's servant and the white man had many curious and valuable things in his possession. She smelled the soap and liked it and forthwith laid the case before Wana-Ngosa's mother. Thereafter, I gathered, a family conference had taken place. Wana-Ngosa overcame her womanly reserve without difficulty. The fragment of soap was accepted as an advance on the trade, but it was understood that the price of Wana-Ngosa's favors was no less than a full cake of soap to be delivered before the evening of the following day.

And when the day came and we broke camp, the mother sent Wana-Ngosa's brother to collect. All the boxes were already packed when Kosamu put in his appearance and the soap was packed with them. He spent a day of considerable anxiety for Wana-Ngosa's brother had dogged him during the whole day's march with the fidelity of a shadow and the maddening persistence of a tse-tse fly.

The morals of the affair I felt to be entirely out-

side my province. Wana-Ngosa's brother, when he stood before me that night to tell his story, was angry. He had brought a spear with him and there was nothing, in the justice of the case, to prevent him from taking a jab or two at Kosamu and depriving me forever of my good-natured personal rain-maker.

I could not do without Kosamu. I could do without a cake of toilet soap. And Wana-Ngosa's brother departed for his native village the next morning after he had eaten and slept with the porters, clutching in one hand his spear, and in the other a little square of soap in a tissue paper wrapper.

IV

CHIWAHLI WOMEN

MARRIAGE OF KUNDA

Kunda had reached the age of adolescence. Chiwahli, whose restless eye observed everything in the village, said to me one day solemnly:

"A man should marry young wives. He should marry them young, when they can just sleep behind his back and can learn to mind and obey like children. He should marry a woman before her mother talks too much to her, and before other women put ideas in her head."

He glanced around cautiously to make sure that none of his women were in hearing, and went on, wagging his head:

"Marry a girl before she learns the nasty, tricky ways of women. You get them young. They sleep behind your back. They learn what you like and what you don't like."

He raised a hand, palm upward.

"Marry them young and they don't ask for much. Why? Because they don't know much. And it is just as well that a woman should not know much. If she knows anything, she thinks she knows everything. If she begins to want a string of beads, she ends by wanting a goat. She whispers with her mother, and together they find more things to ask you for.

"Marry them young," Chiwahli went on, "and you won't have to beat them. A slap, a touch is enough. Other women you must beat all the time. If you do

not beat them, you lose control. If you lose control, her mother and her whole family drop down upon you. If there is a newcomer in the village and he is handsome, she will try to sleep with him. Some way or other she will manage to get into his hut at night, and her mother and family will swear she is true to you. But when they are young, you are kind to them. They like you. You punish them. They fear you."

"I am old and love peace," said Chiwahli. "I have been watching for younger women."

The night before her initiation, Kunda lay in the darkness of her mother's hut and a feeling she had never known before held her rigid on her small cot of willow sticks, with her eyes staring up at the dingy thatch of the roof. She was twelve years old, and had arrived at the turning point of her life. What lay behind her was childhood, beginning with the days when her little black head had rolled from side to side as she slumbered, strapped to the back of her mother. Days when she had toddled around the village with the other children or sat gravely watching the chickens scratching for seed in the bare earth in front of her mother's hut. And now childhood was over; play-time and the little labors of childhood were over; and what lay ahead of her was a mystery—womanhood and marriage.

She lay quite alone, for with the first sign of the change in her body, her mother had left her. No woman of child-bearing age was allowed to look at

her, since even a glance would mean that they would be forever barren. She lay in a sort of bewildered terror, staring up at the shadows with bright round eyes, for though she had known that all children became men and women and that all men and women were once children, she had not thought that these things happened suddenly. From outside she could hear the night noises of the village, the sputter and crackle of cook fires burning to their last smoulder, the shrill chatter of a woman's voice and the bass of a man's remonstrance from the hut immediately behind hers, where old Chimbakuma was quarreling with his wives; a baby's wail from somewhere far off in the darkness; and from the wild open space that always seemed to creep closer with the night, a symphony of animal voices mingled with mournful hoots of the owls.

Tonight she was alone, and loneliness hurt her. Tomorrow she would be alone with a more terrifying loneliness; in all the wildness of animal voices, in shadows that concealed a terror, under the high gleam of the stars. The initiation was being prepared for her. She had often thought of it; she had watched other girls who had become women wrapped in blankets and carried by old women of the village out into the wildness of the veldt, and it had not seemed so terrible to her then, for she had thought of it as a thing of the far and distant future. And now this mystery was upon her. It crouched in the darkness under her low bed, and leaned down toward her from

the shadows above. It had no shape. It was a terror, nameless and huge, and all night long she stared up at it with round little eyes afraid to wink or close.

Toward daybreak Kunda fell into a troubled slumber, starting awake now and again from dreams that filled her with terror. She opened her eyes again as dawn broke over the village and a pale gray light filtered in through the low doorway. A face—the face of a woman, old and haggard—peered down at her from the shadows. She gave a little cry and sat up suddenly. By the side of the woman stood a small child, and the child's round eyes were fixed on her gravely. The child held a blanket in her hand, and this blanket the old woman wrapped around her. Then she bent, and grunting, picked up the frightened Kunda, blanket and all, and followed by the child, stepped through the low door of the house into the pale dawn.

Outside the village, in the veldt, an enclosure had been constructed surrounded by a barrier of wait-a-bit thorns. It stood by itself, a low mound, brown as the brown of the scorched grass around it and far removed from the trails by which men entered and left the village. Toward this crude shelter the old woman with Kunda in her arms proceeded.

The village, as they passed between the huts, was deserted, for the news had spread that Kunda was about to become a woman, and no woman of child-bearing age might look upon her. The old woman who carried her was too old for children, and the child who followed behind was too young. When

they had reached the enclosure in the open country, the old woman pushed a bit of thorn barrier aside with her stick, entered, and laid Kunda down on a mat of rushes. Then she spoke some words to her, and showed her the exercises that she must take while she lay there; the exercises that were prescribed in the ritual. The child, who had followed them, set down the food and the calabash gourd full of water that she had brought with her from the village. Then both withdrew. The barrier of thorns surrounded Kunda and she was left alone.

Days passed, she did not know how many, but she watched two thin crescents of the new moon rising clear of the shadowy veldt; she watched that moon grow and swim higher until it looked down at her from the sky, full and round and yellow. She ate the food which the old woman brought her daily and drank the water. By day she heard the cries of the wild birds, and the voices of people greeting each other going to and from the village, and watched the vultures wheeling and swerving against a hot blue sky. She learned to count the passing hours from the first gray light of dawn, the first yellow rays of the sunshine that crept through crevices in her barrier to the noon hour when the sun hung grim and fierce above her close shelter, withering her body with a downpour of rays. She learned to listen to the welcome padding of footsteps on the veldt, the shuffle of the old woman's feet as she came with her yams, mealie-flour and water. She learned to listen for the distant threatening voices

when the darkness had fallen, the animal howls that gathered volume as the night went on and washed around her enclosure like a shallow sea of sound. Now and then she heard the sound of drums from the village, the clapping of hands, the crooning of voices, and knew that a dance was going on. And because she was taking her exercises every day and the old woman was nodding approval, Kunda could look forward to the day when she too would take part in the dance, a full-grown woman, stamping her feet and rubbing her breasts against the back of some handsome young warrior leaping and twisting in the dance of young men and women.

On a day that dawned like all the other days since Kunda had waited on her mat of rushes, the old woman pushed aside the barrier of wait-a-bit thorns, and entered the enclosure. Kunda lay on the ground, her eyes still confused after a night of dreams. The old woman bent over and examined her, probing with bright, sharp eyes the secrets of her body. Then she straightened, hobbled out, raised her hand to her mouth, and her voice shrilled out in the high, wailing call of women, the *lampunda.*

From the village the *lampunda* was answered, first by one voice then by another, until a chorus of women's voices had taken it up and the sound drifted out across the veldt. The voices drew nearer, and Kunda could see, through the crevices in her barrier, a procession of women streaming out of the village, still shrilling with their tongues. The procession drew close and

surrounded her barrier. The old woman who had been Kunda's guardian during her days in the veldt walked back into the enclosure and stood over her. With her came another woman, also past the age of child-bearing, carrying a white sheet, and in this sheet Kunda was wrapped and carried back to the village, the crowd of shrilling women following close after her. . . .

And now Kunda's great moment had come, and Chiwahli, squatting on the ground at the other side of the village with the other men who had congregated here to avoid this affair of women, smoked his pipe and listened with satisfaction. He had watched Kunda from childhood. She was soft, round and tender, and now the women of the village were carrying her back from the veldt to the sound of the *lampunda.* A few weeks before, when Kunda's parents had come to him to tell him that their fine young girl was even now being prepared for womanhood, he had nodded and listened. He was old and loved peace, and his old eyes had glistened moistly. Yes, he needed young wives, needed them badly, and he had spoken in terms of leopards' hides and ground corn and tobacco. . . . He was sixty and Kunda was twelve, and he would be kind to her and beat her only to teach her. It was well, very well, to get them young and teach them your own ways of wisdom. . . .

Kunda was brought to the village and taken once more to her mother's hut. She was carried in with her head and body covered in the white sheet, for it

was still dangerous for any woman of child-bearing age to look at her. Kunda was laid on the floor and no woman touched her, for the erring woman would be considered barren and her husband would send her back to her family demanding her purchase price.

The two old women removed the sheet from Kunda's small dark form, bathed her in water and rubbed her body with oils and medicines. Outside the hut a mat of bamboo reeds had been laid on the ground, and in the middle of it, a small round stool was placed. Kunda was seated on the stool, still covered in her white sheet, and the women gathered around her in a circle, clapping their hands and chanting:

"Wona Chiwali Wakotaya Awaiwo
Chiwahli women know how to catch their men
Tusepe Waseya
See, here is a woman, ripe and ready
Pano Kawa wera ati Mawa
Let men look upon her and admire her
Mana Yoya Wokatemba
Goodness gracious, what a woman!"

The chanting grew louder, and the men who had gathered at the other end of the village to keep away from this affair of women, pricked up their ears and listened. The old woman who had brought Kunda her food suddenly stepped into the ring and snatched away the sheet from around her. As they passed, the chanting women offered presents and necklaces of beads, and Kunda's guardian took them and hung them about Kunda's neck. Again the chanting grew

in volume and snatches of obscene songs fell on the ears of the child who had become a woman. And Kunda sat on her stool, round-eyed, staring at the circle of swaying, chanting forms moving around her. Her little body swayed a little to the rhythm of their singing; she rocked back and forth and clapped her hands together. She was a woman now, a woman.

. . . . . .

Night fell and the red flaring embers of the village fires made black grotesques of the figures still revolving and chanting, a little wearily now, around the form of the full-grown woman, Kunda. And Chiwahli, squatting on the ground before his own cook-fire, consulted the glowing coals and nodded his head. He had waited long for Kunda. Well, all good things were worth waiting for, and if they were not good things one didn't bother about them. He was ready for her, ready and waiting.

That night Kunda slept in her mother's hut and to complete the rites of initiation, a youth, chosen for his strength and soundness, slept with her. A few moons later she lay in Chiwahli's bed, to learn his ways and his wisdom.

CHIWAHLI MEN AND WOMEN

From the beginning of history men have sought to dominate women. The story of women is thus a tale of successive stages of slavery and brief periods of seeming emancipation. This has been true in Africa as elsewhere. Yet the women of the Lalas exert a very definite influence on the destinies of their tribe, in domestic life, in superstition and in witchcraft.

Slavery as an institution is practised widely in Africa, and there is an entire class in many districts who are slaves in name as well as in fact. These women have come to their owners in many ways. They may have been stolen or kidnapped by raiders. They are sold to their owners as slave wives. Or a brother may give his sister as a slave to pay off debt, or a father his daughter. After entering the homes of their lords and masters, they have a definite standing in the village communities. They are received on terms of friendship by the other women of the tribe, but they never achieve the plane of confidence and intimacy. They are exempt from the tribal *tabus*—unless they happen to have been stolen from a village of the same sign or totem.

Among Chiwahli women, aristocracy is never a matter of birth, but rather of cash value. Thus a wife who has cost her husband six elephant tusks ranks above a wife who has only cost three, while the wives of a poor man, who may have been purchased

with a few beads, calico and bushels of mealie-flour, belong to the inferior social orders. The men of the Lalas are restricted only by the limitations of their wealth in the matter of the number of wives they wish to marry. Some are forced to content themselves with one, others with a mere dozen or so, but the story is still told of the African Napoleon, Mwenda, whose wives numbered five hundred and included among them one white woman, Maria de Fonseca, the daughter of a certain Portuguese captain in the province of Bunguella.

Mwenda it was who, raiding from the East Coast, bloodily imposed his authority on the local tribes, cruelly and horribly subduing entire districts and building himself a huge native city. Here it was that the white missionary "Dan" Crawford was held as a prisoner at large for twenty years and came to be looked upon as a sort of high priest of the country. But Mwenda, although he had wives in his harem of all shades from black to cream color, still lacked a white wife. He had the temerity to offer the Portuguese governor of Angola thirty elephant tusks for his daughter, and although he was unsuccessful in this, actually succeeded in purchasing Maria de Fonseca from her father. The woman was looked upon as a priestess during her lifetime, and worshipped as a goddess after her death.

Chiwahli women are tall, slender, upright. They are shy and reticent with men, but among themselves inveterate gossips. With them modesty has little to

do with dress and covering of the body. It is largely a matter of *tabu,* of certain things that, according to the law immemorial of the tribe, very definitely may not be done. Their dress consists of a single piece of bark cloth, hung below the breasts and reaching to the knees. They are fond of bright calicos and of blankets for the nights in the Irumi uplands are often cold. When a white man's *safari* is passing through the village the women are first to come forth. They kneel and clap their hands in cadence, loudly at first and then more softly. They speak the great word of the Lalas, *Mutenda, Mutenda,* meaning "greeting," when they meet you, "please" when they want something, "thank you" when they have received something. They file toward the camp in the early morning, walking slowly and very erect in single file across the veldt, carrying baskets on their heads without the aid of their hands, their infants strapped to their backs. There is a dignity and a grace to these early morning processions while the rays of the sun still stream level with the plain. Their gaze is always fixed straight ahead, they cleave to the path like dark statues moving along a groove without paying the slightest attention to the living bundles on their backs.

Before the white man's tent, they deposit their baskets on the ground and await their turn to barter. For a basket of flour, eggs, chickens, goats, which are used to feed the white man and his porters of the *safari,* the white man gives in return a piece of calico, measuring the length of the strip against the width of

the basket. The native considers the white man foolish in his bargainings as in other matters. The white man eats the eggs he buys, and this is to the native quite fantastic. For if he waited a little, he says, he could eat chickens instead. At one time, the natives, thinking to outbargain the white man, constructed their baskets shallow and flat but very wide so that they would not hold much flour. The white man replied by measuring his strips against the depth of the basket rather than the width. As a result they received strips about one inch in width. These the women collected and sewed together. Single strips were considered quite adequate for clothing a small girl of four or five. The strips were tied around the stomach and a little ribbon allowed to dangle down in front and behind.

Chiwahli women hold it immodest to be seen talking with a man in public. A husband never speaks to his wife when she is with other women, nor is it seemly for a man to touch or embrace his wife in public. The nude body is not held immodest. As a people they are quite without morals in our sense of the word—unmoral rather than immoral. Intercourse between men and unmarried women is not held to be wrong as long as the girl obtains the consent of her mother. But after the marriage ceremony, a woman's body is the property of her husband, and adultery is punishable as an infringement of the right of ownership.

Chiwahli women are vain and fond of adornment. For beads and calicos their hunger is quite as insatiable

as that of their white sisters for silkstuffs and pearls. Nothing goes to waste that the white man throws away. A key from a sardine can makes a nice lip ornament. A large safety pin, used for horse blankets, makes an excellent ear ring and four or five can be used as a handsome necklace. On the other hand, the natives are not interested in European food. Sugar is an unknown commodity to them, and they use wild honey in its stead. They make their own fermented drink in the form of banana beer, a heady concoction and not often partaken of because of the comparative scarcity of banana trees in northern Rhodesia, and the reluctance of the natives to do any extra work.

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The men of the Chiwahli tribe have their own notions as to many things, including the creation. They have their own Adam and Eve and know that originally the earth was a very desolate place indeed, without villages and trails and hut-fires, given over to the beasts and the reptiles.

And before them, it may be assumed, the earth was even more desolate still, and would have endured in that condition, had it not been for the unfortunate curiosity of the honey-bird who first released beasts and reptiles and diseases on the earth. For Lesa (God), so the story goes, shortly after the creation, gave the honey-bird two gourds, and in one of them all sorts of seeds were contained to bring grass and plant life to the earth, and in the other there were all

CHIWALI MEN AND WOMEN

manner of animals and snakes as well as the diseases from which men suffer. Lesa told the honey-bird to scatter the contents of the seed gourd over the earth, so that it might grow with green things and yield fruit in the harvest. The other gourd he told him to bury deep in the ground, without looking into it. But the honey-bird was curious and looked into the gourd, and the beasts and reptiles and diseases crawled out and became the enemies of man and their prey.

How the first two men came to be on earth is somewhat vague to the Chiwahli man, but the question of the sexes is less troubling. For Lesa, desiring that the race should spread and multiply in Africa as in the Garden of Eden, gave one of the men who had hitherto been sexless, certain instructions. He should do certain things, said Lesa, with a calabash gourd, things which, out of deference to Western modesty, it is just as well not to describe. And to the other man also he gave certain instructions and a calabash gourd. . . . And one became a man and the other a woman.

The first men of the Lalas to enter Rhodesia were three brothers who came across Lake Nyassa from the east. With them they brought a number of their people. And they grew tired of their long journey. The eldest brother decided he would go back and returned, but the second brother stayed. It was agreed that all elephants who died looking toward the east should be his, while all who died facing toward the west would belong to the oldest brother. But the third brother, seeing that he was being left out entirely, said:

"But where do I come in?"

"Oh, we forgot you," said the other two brothers.

"Very well," said the third brother. "I shall turn into a lion and eat all the game, and thus I shall be revenged on you."

And he turned himself into a lion, out of his desire for vengeance, and thereafter all the spirits of chiefs who have died have followed his example and gone into the bodies of lions.

As to the Sabbath day, the Chiwahli man only too willingly follows the precept of the white man. Since he has so many days of rest in the week anyway, it is not in the least difficult to persuade him to accept another, and for the rest it seems entirely reasonable to him that Lesa should have refrained from work one day out of seven. And whenever a new Sabbath is proposed, he accepts the suggestion with cheerful alacrity. Thus when the Seventh Day Adventists came and proclaimed Saturday as a rest day, he added it to the Friday of rest he had already set aside on the suggestion of the Mohammedan Arabs and when other missionaries proclaimed Sunday as the one and authentic holy day, he consented with the best possible grace. Three days of devoted contemplation of the Lord's ways and wonders he felt to be not in the least excessive.

And yet it is inaccurate to say that the Chiwahli man is lazy. If he doesn't hurry around from morning to night putting bricks on top of other bricks, piling up accumulations of paper with ink marks on them, pulling levers and rolling here and there briskly on

wheels—it is chiefly, as we have already pointed out, because he has no need to do so. His gardens give him grain in return for a little seeding and hoeing, his huts keep out the rain, his bow and arrow furnishes him with meat from the veldt. By rubbing two dry sticks of wood together he has learned to make the fire to warm himself and cook by. He knows where the iron ore lies near the surface of the ground, and has learned how to smelt it and weld it into the few iron implements he needs for the hunt and warfare. And the effect of the white man's civilizing proximity has not, as might have been expected, acted to raise him in the scale of civilized beings. Rather it has tended to emphasize his idleness and degrade him.

For with cheap calico available he has no longer any need to occupy himself industriously in the preparation of bark cloth from the *musamba* tree. He can buy iron and tinware implements more easily than he can manufacture them. His craftsmanship, sometimes beautiful in its crude strength, is becoming obsolete. He has accepted a cheaper standard and lost in strength, in integrity, and, as men know these things, in sense of values. What civilization he has known, therefore, has tended to degrade him from the primitive rather than raise him on the scale of human happiness.

In his human relations, he is childish. Here, as in other things, he knows no tomorrow. He makes friends, for the most part, with those he thinks will benefit him, and when the benefit has ceased friendship ceases with it. He has many wives and large families,

but this is the result of his heritage and environmental conditions and not of racial altruism. And he has no profound yearning for life after death, although he believes the spirit has an existence quite independent of the body and hence survives it. For him it is more true than with Christian peoples that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof—" and the good also, for to him the day exists in and of itself and tomorrow casts no shadow backwards over his reckonings.

To him mechanical inventions are interesting but hardly, in the long run, profitable. He is not interested in labor-saving devices, since his labor is slight anyway. He does not work with his head, but simply with his hands. When he builds a hut he does it quickly but adequately, knowing full well that it has no permanence. For if a relative or a friend or even a passing stranger dies in it, he will have to burn it to chase away the spirit, and if a dead chief is borne through the village on his way to burial, the whole village must be moved and moved quickly. Hence the difficulty of archæological work in Africa, for the vanished villages leave no traces behind them.

To the west Chiwahli men look as to the land from whence no one returns, the land of sunset, of death and of night. For from east to west the slave traders have come on their raids and carried off their captives westward over the mountains. And none who have gone forth in chains have ever returned to tell the tale. . . .

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The childhood of Chiwahli men is short and leaves little or no remembrance in after years. From the time of puberty, when he can satisfy the rites of initiation, he is a man, and lives with the other young men in their hut until the time of his marriage.

The sense of justice among Chiwahli men is different from ours, and this point is interesting. For, as he reasons, to punish an innocent person is often quite effective when the guilty one cannot be found. The punished person, aroused, will always want to take it out on someone else and his search for the guilty offender will be ardent. Thus are the ways of justice simplified.

If in war and tribal politics, men are the dominating factors, the women hold the reins of power in domestic life. Clannish, jealous, superstitious, witchcraft seems to be their main preoccupation. The extent of their subjugation is purely a matter of their husband's ability to dominate them. A weak man is henpecked mercilessly and ruled by his women.

The mother-in-law is the dominating factor in the family, and the children belong to her. She rears her daughters, sells them, and continues to look after their welfare and the welfare of their children. Except in the case of the chiefs, the children bear her name and not the name of the father. She is the central figure in family disputes and litigations and tribal *tabus* ordain that a man may not look his mother-in-law in the face.

Occasionally even the lawful prerogatives of men

are infringed on and Chiwahli women still tell with pride the tale of the black Joan of Arc, the sister of the King of the Shilas, who led the Lundas in war against her brother, conquered him, and then organized the women into a secret society, the *Bundindu,* whose power is still felt although its name and offices have disappeared. For King Wa-Kuva, irritated with his nephew, his sister's son, had the boy flayed alive while his sister was absent on a hunting expedition, and when she returned she found that her brother was using the skin of her son as a rug in his hut. She said very little, but that night she disappeared from the village of Wa-Kuva, and when she returned, it was at the head of the war-like tribe of the Lundas who beat her brother in a pitched battle and burned his town.

She it was who, impressed with the wrongs that women were suffering, organized them into a close-knit secret society, the *Bundindu,* and the society grew so strong and powerful that no man of the tribe dared call his soul his own. When a husband mistreated his wife, word was brought to the sisters of the society and that night there was a gathering of the clan. The husband was waylaid in the bush and beaten by a score or more of frantic women impressed with the sense of grievance they had inherited for generations. If a husband bewitched his wife, so that she died, the *Bundindu* took matters in hand and visited on the husband the punishment appropriate to witches. Finally it was the husbands' turn to rise in revolt, and the *Bundindu* was put down. It ceased to exist as an

organization, but still exists in fact in the clannishness of Chiwahli women that leads them even on slight provocation to rise in domestic revolts against their husbands, as the story of Mkalusha and his wife goes to show.

ILL-OMENED WORDS OF MKALUSHA

With his wife, Mkalusha had lived at peace aside from such minor disturbances as form the usual overtones of the domestic harmony in Africa as elsewhere. But since his promotion from a humble villager to major-domo of a white man's *safari* his sense of importance had risen considerably. His habit of command, together with a pair of old trousers, marked him out as a person of some distinction in the village. It was only when he brought the coals of his importance to the home fires that the flame rose up and singed him.

For one morning having been ordered to get the *safari* ready early, Mkalusha rose and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes. Beside him in the darkness of his hut, a darker shadow reposed, snoring loudly. This was Mkalusha's wife, and as was his custom, of late, when she put slumber ahead of her domestic duties, Mkalusha kicked her.

"Get up and get me food, for the white man is starting early."

The shadow at his feet stopped snoring but did not stir. Mkalusha spoke more sternly:

"Get up and get me food, for I am very hungry."

The shadow turned over and groaned, and Mkalusha lost his temper. He spoke loudly, shouting the first words that came into his head.

"You are a lazy woman. Here I am on my feet and

no food is before me to be eaten. You are like all women, lazy, deceitful, good for nothing. Your husband's stomach may cry for food, and you do nothing to fill it."

Mkalusha gave his wife a kick that was not so gentle. She opened her eyes but did not stir. Mkalusha felt her eyes upon him, and some of his bad temper vanished. It is one thing to shout at a sleeping woman, and another to kick a woman who is awake. Besides, his words had been injudicious. He stood on one foot and then on the other and his voice when he tried to make it stern again fell flat and hollow on his own ears.

"Well," he said, "where is my food? Here I stand and I am waiting."

Mkalusha's wife spoke very slowly:

"I had a dream," she said, "and in my dream I heard you shouting at me. You were the owner of certain words: that all women are lazy. You were the owner of other words: that all women are deceitful and good for nothing."

Mkalusha shuffled his feet and stifled a groan. He knew what was coming.

"Didn't you say I was lazy? How can I get your food if I am lazy, for lazy women do not cook."

Mkalusha's wife turned over and showed him her back.

. . . . . .

When the sun rose and looked into the round door of her hut, Mkalusha's wife rose with it. She cooked her meal and ate, and then sat for a moment in

thought. The village was astir, and the *safari,* her husband with it, had long since made its departure, into the veldt. Mkalusha's wife stood by the door of her hut, and gave the shrill call, the *lampunda.* And from all sides in the village, the women gathered around her. The wife of Mkalusha spoke:

"This morning, when my husband rose, he kicked me. I was half asleep and my eyes were closed. He said that he wanted food. It was right that he should kick me and ask for food, for when a man kicks you he does not look at other women, and when he asks for food it should be given to him. But then my husband's tongue began to wobble and certain words fell off of it. And these words I am going to tell you." She paused impressively.

The women seated on the ground around her gasped. Mkalusha's wife continued:

"He said that I was lazy and insulted me. He said that *all* women were lazy and insulted you. He said that all women were lazy and treacherous and good for nothing. He said they never helped their husbands."

Mkalusha's wife paused dramatically, and the women about her shook their heads. Slowly they walked off together. The sun rose higher and poured its fierce rays down on the round, peaked roofs of the *shambas,* and on the gardens where the women worked slowly, gathering in the corn, shaking their heads and muttering over the words Mkalusha had uttered. The burnished blue dome of the sky seemed to give off a heat of its own, as if a thousand braziers

burned behind it; and from the jungle a steamy mist arose and writhed upward through the choked, tortuous growth of leaves and creepers. The sun dropped slowly toward the west, and now its rays streamed out level across the rolling immensity of brown desolation and fell full in the faces of the *safari,* as they turned back from the hunt. They had killed much game that day, and thinking of the evening meal ahead, Mkalusha's spirits rose. He had eaten well at noon when the hunt had paused to rest, and the events of the morning seemed a long way behind him. Now again he was hungry, and the other men of the *safari,* as they plodded along the narrow beaten path that led them homeward through the twilight, thought of the cookfires ahead in the village, of the hot mealie-flour, of the meat they would eat since the kill that day had been so large.

Outside the village they made a halt and divided the meat, and each man took his share to his hut, so that his wife might cook it and all might feast. And as each man approached his hut, he paused for a moment in consternation.

Where there should have been welcoming, warming fires, there were no fires. Where there should be pots with the mealie-flour slowly heating in them, there were no pots. Where there should have been women busying themselves about their husbands' evening meal, there were no women, and the village wore an air of silence and desertion. They threw down their meat and called angrily, and the women appeared from the darkness of the huts where they had been waiting in

silence. They said: "We are hungry and have meat here, yet no fires are burning and no mealie-flour is cooking. We are hungry and want food and want food at once, for we have travelled all day and are hungry." But the women only shook their heads, for, they said:

"Are we not lazy women? Did not Mkalusha say that all women are lazy and did nothing for their husbands? Therefore we are lazy and cannot cook for you."

They said:

"But we did not say that you were lazy."

The women wagged their heads.

"Ah, but one of your brothers, Mkalusha, said so. He said that all women are lazy and deceitful and good for nothing. And so we cannot cook for you."

A hubbub of voices, roused to excited argument, spread through the village. Then the sound of voices fell off, and one by one the fires were lit. Mkalusha, unconscious of the mischief his words had wrought, was still at work putting things to rights for the night in the white man's compound.

An hour later, when Mkalusha had finished and started off toward his hut with his share of the meat slung over his shoulder, the moon was just rising. It seemed to squat for a moment, liquid and golden, on the brown dome of a hill to the east, and the round roofs of the *shambas,* and the mysterious, groping shapes of trees, were plotted against a silvering sky like shapes of night, cut and wrought out of ebony. In a blur of light thrown off by a dying fire, a group

of men were chattering and gesticulating, and one of these shouted at Mkalusha as he approached.

"Ah, you of the babbling tongue," he said. "Come here, for your tongue is the cause of much trouble."

Mkalusha set down his load and looked around him uneasily.

"Is there trouble?" he asked. "Ah, but there is always trouble."

Another voice spoke out more loudly.

"You were the owner of words that have caused all the trouble. And the trouble is yours, because you belong to the words that caused it. We came back from the white man's hunt, and no food was prepared for us. You said that women were good for nothing and lazy. We had to pay our wives with beads and calico to make up to them for the words you, our brother, have spoken. Otherwise we should have gone hungry this night. Now it is your turn to pay us."

. . . Mkalusha returned to his hut that night hungry and despondent. Calicos, beads, tin cans, things he had picked from the refuse heaps of the white man, as well as a number of fine elephant spears, had been taken from him by the clamorous husbands whose evening meal he had spoiled and whose most precious possessions had gone to their wives in atonement for his foolish words. Only one prospect in the immediate future gave him a feeling of joy, and that was the prospect of beating his wife soundly. He hurried along in the darkness toward his hut on the fringe of the village, spied his own roof in a group of three with

fires burning before their doors, and halted suddenly in awful consternation. Grouped under the eaves, a family party awaited his homecoming, and there was a threat in their very silence. His mother-in-law, his father-in-law, his brother-in-law stood there together, and behind them stood his wife, and she smiled on Mkalusha maliciously. Their words jumped out at him through the darkness:

They belaboured him for insulting their daughter and sister. Their daughter and sister was not lazy. It was his wobbly tongue that was full of evil. His father-in-law gesticulated, his mother-in-law moaned and scolded. Her daughter was a good girl, for hadn't she brought her up? She was an amiable girl, for no evil omen had attended her childhood. Beside, his mother-in-law was a woman, and she had been insulted along with the other women of the village. And she wanted immediate and adequate restitution.

And so Mkalusha gave up his remaining possession, the meat he had carefully saved from the chase. As for his tongue, then and thereafter, it wobbled no longer. It clove to the roof of his mouth whenever the desire came over him to speak his mind out about women. As for his wife, if he beat her more often and more thoroughly than usual, still there was the old adage to comfort her that a beaten woman is never jealous.

. . . . . .

Monogamous marriages are discouraged by the women themselves, since among many wives the domestic duties can be shared. The single wife com-

plains, and not unjustly, of loneliness, and also in many cases of monotony. The husband with many wives may offer one of them to a visiting friend or even a stranger under his roof, as a gesture of hospitality, but of a single wife a husband is bound to be more or less jealous and watchful, and her life, in consequence, will lack the excitement of novelty.

Taking into account the wandering disposition of the male, Chiwahli women are prone to pass lightly over acts of infidelity on the part of a husband, as long as he is a good provider. Jealousy is only aroused if a husband makes a handsome present to a woman outside the family, or even singles out one wife for special attention. If he persists in indiscretions of this character it is not difficult to put poison in his food and render him totally incapable of a further unworthy and unjust discrimination.

The ritual of courtship and marriage is simple and direct. When a man of marriageable age finds a girl he likes, he sends a friend or relative to her mother to sound the ground out. Then the suitor himself brings the girl a suitable present of tobacco, beads or calico. If she accepts, the courtship is in order. His next step is to visit a maternal aunt, who is the business head in such arrangements and discuss the purchase price with her. When an agreement has been reached, he either pays in full or makes a suitable deposit on the installment plan.

After the arrangements have been completed, the actual marriage ceremony takes place. A cover of bark cloth is laid on the ground in front of the girl's

hut and the women of the village gather around to the sound of the *luusonsola.** The night before the ceremony, the bridegroom gathers his friends together and a bachelor dinner takes place at which a good deal of banana beer is consumed and a good many of the standard jokes of the occasion change hands. The bridegroom is escorted to the bride's house by as many of the convivial spirits as are sufficiently sober after the night before, and the bride is similarly escorted by a group of women from the other side of the village. The gourds of banana beer circulate freely, and then the bride and groom sit down side by side on the ground in the middle of the circle and are covered with the cloth. When a sufficient time has elapsed for the consummation of the union, the dance begins, the cloth is removed, and the bride and groom sit in the center of the circle of moving figures. The dance continues for hours, often all through the night that follows. Every once in a while a dancer jumps to the middle of the circle and begins a caper on his own account, involving various complicated manœuvres of the stomach, arms and legs. When he appears to be on the point of exhaustion, someone will spring to his assistance, putting his knee to the man's spine and straightening him up by pulling his shoulders back. This has the effect of refreshing him for another hour or so. Women may also join the inner circle of solo dancers, and in the meantime the outer circle continues its elaborate writhing and posturing around the bride and groom. The dance lasts until the dancers, exhausted and drunk with banana beer, fall to the

* Native musical instrument.

ground. Then the bride and groom retire to the new hut that has been built for them.

The institution of polygamy has had the one tangible effect of keeping the native busier than he would ever be under a monogamous system. The more wives he has, the harder he must keep at his own part of the work of supporting the family and feeding the children. He must plant more grain in the spring for his women to harvest, hunt more frequently to provide meat and skins, lay out more gardens and build larger huts. And this necessity puts a natural check on the number of the wives he marries. He is not so idle a fellow as is usually supposed, but neither is he in love with work, and hence he sticks to the happy medium of as many wives as he can support without undue strain and effort.

The women are the most zealous and the most jealous guardians of the tribal *tabus*. They watch all the other men and women of the village, scrupulously anxious to discover any infringement of the spiritual laws of the tribe. Whether the offender happens to be father, mother, sister, brother or husband, they will promptly bring him to justice to account for his sin. To allow a guilty person to escape, they believe, would only bring the vengeance of hostile spirits on themselves, and for a person to shield a witch is as great a crime as to practice dark magic and witchcraft.

. . . . . .

As to what punishments are generally held adequate to cope with the witch evil, the facts in the case of Mufumbi will serve to show.

FACTS IN THE CASE OF MUFUMBI

To the advanced age of fifty, Chetomba had carried with her only one habit of her flaming youth. This was an inordinate love of tobacco. She lived across the Lusenfwa River in the village of Kumbe, a respectable married woman who in her better days had achieved a certain reputation.

Now, in her old age, Chetomba often crossed the river, in pursuit of her major vice, to beg a few handfuls of tobacco from the white man. Her pipe was a huge affair of calabash that required a charcoal fire to light properly, so even the white man came to fight shy of Chetomba's visits. Whenever she succeeded in filling her pipe she made herself comfortable under a tree, rammed the load home in her calabash with live charcoal, and settled down for a day of it.

In Kumbe also lived Mufumbi. He was a stranger who had appeared in the village many moons before, and had settled there. He had abandoned his hearth and his home in the Congo land, so the story went, as the result of the unreasonable attitude of his mothers-in-law. His story was a tragic one, such as the men of Kumbe could sympathize with. His mothers-in-law had made him work too hard. Rather than succumb to overwork, Mufumbi had cleared out. In Kumbe he lived alone and thankfully. He had his hut and a small garden. Occasionally he hunted. He had

a great respect but no liking for elderly women as was natural in a man who had quarreled with his mothers-in-law, and, living the orderly life of a bachelor, he could hardly reckon with the wiles of Chetomba.

Rest periods in such a simple, well-ordered existence as Mufumbi's were frequent and he used his leisure to cultivate his powers of observation. Thus he would squat on his haunches for hours outside the white man's compound and watch the evidences of strange and exotic habits within. Day after day he would sit there perusing the comings and goings, the rising, the cooking, the eating, as one might peruse the chapters of an exorbitantly amusing book. He grew to be as familiar a mark on the landscape outside the compound as a tree stump. And one day Mufumbi was missing from his post.

Days went by, and Mufumbi did not return. Inquiry in the village elicited nothing but headshakings and an air of profound and palpable mystery. No one knew anything about Mufumbi. He had disappeared. Perhaps a spirit . . . perhaps a beast in the veldt while he was hunting. But no one seemed in the least concerned. When the week expired Mufumbi returned.

He was a strange and formidable sight for the eyes of a white man. Upon his back were great raw welts the thickness of a thumb. His forehead and entire head were swollen and circumscribed by a great bloody gash. He looked as though he had just stepped out from a mediæval torture chamber. He knelt at the

entrance of my tent clapping his hands together.

"Greeting, Bwana, you must punish them for what they did to me. For I am not a witch."

The welts and gashes were clear enough to me now but more vague was the question of who had inflicted them and why. He had been accused of being a witch. I asked him what had happened. His reply was characteristic.

"They did it, but they told me I must not tell who they are. For, they said, if the white man finds out, he will tie us up. So they said I must not tell."

It was useless to question him for they had told him not to tell. And in this way the native always acts. It was in a roundabout way and only after many weeks of inquiry that I finally found out what had happened to Mufumbi. It was a dark tale and in it Chetomba figured prominently.

For Chetomba had died of pneumonia, an epidemic that was running through the village of Kumbe. Before she died, she had called her husband to her bedside and had told him a story.

The native does not believe in death from natural causes if there is any way to account for it through supernatural ones and most deaths are held to be the result of witchcraft. It was necessary, therefore, for Chetomba, dying, to ascertain who had bewitched her. Chetomba therefore thought hard. Who could have bewitched her? Well, who had done her harm? The answer occurred to her at once. The man from the foreign village, the outlander Mufumbi. And this is the story Chetomba told her husband. She said:

"I went to Mufumbi's hut many moons ago and asked for tobacco. I went because I knew he had a garden, and also because being without women he had more tobacco than most men. I asked for tobacco. He gave me tobacco. So I thought I would have some more. I went back the next day and asked for more tobacco. He gave me tobacco again and I sat under the tree and smoked it and was happy. The third day I went to him and he became angry. He called me a name. He also said, 'You are a married woman. You have a husband. Why shall I grow tobacco for you, a woman with a husband? Your husband is lazy. Tell him to grow tobacco and get out of here.' And with these words he drove me out of his hut."

The logic of the case was irresistible. The dying Chetomba knew that she had been bewitched. And who would think of bewitching her except Mufumbi, a foreigner from a strange village who had driven her out from his hut with harsh words?

A few hours later her husband, seeing that the end was near, took Chetomba on his back and carried her into the veldt so that she might not die in the house and leave her spirit there. Death came for her the next day. She was buried and the hut was set on fire so that her spirit should not come back from the veldt and haunt it. Her husband reported Mufumbi's infamy to the elders, and Mufumbi was apprehended.

He was taken into a hut at the edge of the village, thrown on his face and lashed with the *kiboko,* the heavy whip of rhinoceros hide, every lash of which removes the skin from a man's back as neatly as a

surgical operation. He was accused of being a witch. More than that he was accused of a large number of civil offenses, viz., causing the loss of one wife to her husband, causing the loss of one daughter to her mother, causing the loss of one sister to her brother and so on down the line. Each relative pressed eagerly his suit for damages and each wanted to use the whip. Mufumbi protested his innocence but they merely screamed at him and lashed him the harder. They put a rope around his head, put a stick to it, and proceeded to twist it tourniquet fashion until he felt his brains being squeezed out of his ears. After they had put the question to him a second and third time and twisted his head a little harder a confession was forced out of him. A halt was called in the proceedings and the injured parties took council. Mufumbi had confessed that he was a witch. In that case they might as well proceed to kill him at once. But Mundalira, the wise man, who had watched the proceedings, gravely shook his head.

"He is not of our village," he said, "therefore to kill him might cause trouble. Let us rather make him pay."

So it was decided that Mufumbi should pay. His debt was in the first place to the husband for the loss of a wife, then to the mother for the loss of a daughter, to the brother for the loss of a sister, and so on down the line. All of Mufumbi's possessions were seized and distributed among the injured parties. Moreover, the mother-in-law put in a claim for the children that Chetomba might have borne. Under the laws of

the tribe, the children belong to the mother-in-law. It was not remarked that Chetomba was above child-bearing age. . . .

When Mufumbi came to me, he was a man stricken and impoverished. He had levied on his relatives in his far-off village to aid him in his misery. His body smarted and ached from the whip and the tourniquet and he had come to the white man for aid.

But he would not say who had done all this. For they had told him not to tell. . . .

V

DEATH OF CHIWAHLI

DEATH OF CHIWAHLI

Across the veldt came the rumbling of drums in a dull, slow rhythm. It came from the royal village of Chiwahli, across the loom of low, brown hills. Full, measured and insistent, the sound seemed to flatten itself out on the wide expanse of the plain, rolling along like the muttered intonations of thunder. And the porters of the *safari* shook their heads. Something had happened that they must not speak about and pretend not to take notice of. Chiwahli, the King, was dead.

But they could shake their heads and mutter, not to each other, but each one to himself. Ah, but it was known, known for many moons that Chiwahli, the old King, would die. For many moons ago, it was said, as he was walking down the trail to the river a butterfly had alighted on his shoulder and stayed there. A few days later when he had come out with his retinue to meet the white man's *safari,* a grasshopper had jumped across his path. These were the kind of ill-omens that denoted witchcraft and betrayed a man when he was least expecting it. And now Chiwahli, the old King, was dead.

. . . . . .

Four months went by, months during which the drums kept on rolling from villages along the banks of the river, from clusters of *shambas* on patches of high-ground in the swamps, and from the royal village,

where the dead king sat in his tall chair of state, in the royal hut, bound all over with cloth except for the face which had saucer-like shells over the eyes and nose and another on the skull, like a tiny porcelain crown.

Four months of wailing and lamenting in the broad courtyard before Chiwahli's hut, behind a curtain of which the royal corpse sat, decomposing; months when the sound of lamentation and the drum beat, stealing out across the veldt, was picked up and caught by all the villages through the length and breadth of the old king's land. Then came a few days of silence, and a long *safari* of natives appeared in the village where I was staying to invite the white man to the funeral. For the friends of the King must be on hand when the King was being buried. Those whom he had honored in life, must honor him in death.

First came the death announcers, young men, carrying with them the token, a tusk of ivory, hoary and black from age. Then came the Mundalira, the King's councillor, to formalize the ceremony of invitation; then came Kayumbu and Mshaluka, chiefs of Chiwahli villages, with their retainers and followers. The time had come, they said, to lay the old King to rest, for food was scarce, the appetite of the host of dead-watchers in the royal village was enormous; and the funeral was prepared.

And so we set off for the royal village, across swamps and the hill country, through valleys and across the treacherous Mkushi River, past waterfalls, and still pools of water where the lilies, red, white and

purple lay floating on their tables of round, green leaves through the outskirts of straw-roofed villages where the goats browsed in the meadows, and flowers, blue and golden, dotted the emerald grass. Across the mountainous Mufulwe the long train of silent black men proceeded, past secluded cascades in narrow defiles of the escarpment; over more meadows inundated by the heavy waters of the rainy months, and on through stony canyons, until the royal village lay in sight with smoke rising through the thatch of its *shambas.*

And here, a mile off from Chiwahli's village, the friends and relatives of the dead king came out in a long procession to meet us and escort us back to the royal hut. The wailing, the clash of the *lusonsolas,* the beating of drums and the shrill trilling *lampunda* of the women beat across the intervening space, louder with every step we took. There were hundreds of people gathered in groups in the village, and the courtyard, where the King's hut stood, was crowded. There were the professional tear-makers, crying aloud and beating their breasts, and there, in front of the hut door, sat the councillors of Chiwahli, grave men and silent, with their eyes fixed on the ground below the feet of the multitude that pressed and surged all around them.

And the professional mourners, old men in ragged loin cloths, with ashes smeared on their wrinkled bodies, shook their hoary heads and clapped their gnarled old hands together. "B-o-walwa wa-wa-ni," they sang . . . *whose is the beer?* "Wa-mushish-

inga" . . . *it is the beetle's!* "B-a-wene uko w-e-r-e?" . . . *but where has the owner gone?* "Walire-uku-wumwbwe-mishinge" . . . *he has gone to be buried by ants.* And an aged crippled man pushed out from the throng suddenly and sang in a high sing-song, "Who now will give his old servant a strip of the white man's calico to wear, and who now will give me his beer-pot to drain, now when my old wife who brewed so well has gone to the land where they brew not?"

The long day passed in talk and in wailing, and the first flame of the sunset came to smoulder on the hills to the west. And with twilight came the *"Chaula-lampunda,"* a stately and dignified woman whose trills were audible miles away as she paced twice around the royal death hut, where old Chiwahli, upright in his chair of state, sat bound up in rags, staring at the curtain that divided him from the death watchers with round sockets for eyes. And another woman, with a *lusonsola,* also famed as a mourner, marched in the opposite direction around the hut while the aged drummer crouched on the ground beating out his monotonous, reverberating call that had summoned the old king in his lifetime to the dance, to war and the merrymakings of the village.

With the first long shadows of the night, dancing began and songs were sung and continued all night in the village, and with the dawn came more cries and wailing, ushering in the solemn day of Chiwahli's interment. The curtains from before the hut were

THE OLD KING ON HIS CHAIR OF STATE

THE NEW KING AND HIS COUNSELLORS

pulled aside and the King's people for the last time paid him reverence.

For now the body of the King was ready for interment. The royal flesh that, according to rule and law of the Lalas, must never be put under ground, had fallen away from the bones; and the worms and maggots had been collected and sealed in jars. Now the bones lay smoothly bound in their covering of cloth. The old King, upright in his chair, gazing straight out at his mourning people, was weary for his final rest. And Chituka, the witch-doctor, was already preparing his medicines and magic incantations to find the man or men who had bewitched Chiwahli, and deprived his people of a king and friend. For he on whom a butterfly has alighted has been bewitched, they said, and the story had made the rounds of the country that Chiwahli's evil enemies would be punished.

. . . . . .

Since the old King, during his lifetime, had forbidden the use of the male eland skin for burial, the hide of a bull was brought from the village of Chiwefwe, and after allowing the skin to soak for some hours, it was stretched on poles as sort of a hammock on which the bones of Chiwahli could be carried to their final resting place. The mourners and the village people pressed into the courtyard, ready to form for the funeral procession, but now Mundalira, the fat old councillor, who had watched through the night by the door of his former master, rose and made a speech.

It was not fitting, he said, that the body should be laid in the ground without reposing for a last night on the royal bed, and without a murmur of protest, the ceremony was abandoned for the day and the body taken back into the hut and left there.

Very early the next morning while the silvery light of the stars still pricked through the leafy canopies of the tall trees, the aged men of the village gathered in a shivering throng in the courtyard of Chiwahli's hut, and soon the village and countryside was awakened by their mournful voices in chorus. The old drummer, in his hut, shook the sleep from his eyes and soon the great kettle drum was sending its low reverberations across the veldt. The *lusonsolas* and the clashing of sticks broke into the refrain and swelled the chorus, and the mourners began the shrill wailing song of their sorrow.

At sunrise, the corpse was taken from the bed and placed in the bullhide hammock. The *Kansandas,* the buriers of the dead, whose faces the old King had never seen, picked up the poles, and amidst shouts and cries, tears and loud wails, the procession started off at a sharp pace, turning westward toward the Kampolo River, near which lay the burial place of the Kings. Over hill and down into the valleys, through the rocky passes, and the narrow defiles; knee deep in the flood water of the lush meadows on the prairie land beyond the hills, the wailing procession passed—young men and women, and the old and toil worn hobbling painfully in the rear.

Near the banks of the Kampolo River, a footpath, a

yard wide, had been cleared from the trail to a huge ant hill, and the grass and bushes had been removed from its base. Close to the top of the great mound, a shaft, six feet deep had been sunk, and at its bottom, in the living heart of the swarming ant hill lay the grave. There was a bustle of preparation in the procession that had brought the body of the King for its burial, passing through many wailing and lamenting villages, along the way. And now that the grave was reached, the wailing voices of women rose in shrill screams and shrieks, broken by the hoarse, sorrowful shouting of the men. The drums rolled and the *lusonsolas* clashed as the body of the King was taken from its bullhide hammock and laid in the arms of the *Kansandas.*

And the voices rose once more as the old men with their light burden of bones hobbled forward and disappeared in the shaft of the ant hill. . . . When they came out half an hour later, the wailing had already died down, and, on their hands and knees, the *Kansandas* began to push the dirt in on the corpse with their elbows. For only with the elbows, and never with the hands or with an instrument may the earth be pushed on the body of a king. . . .

And now Chiwahli was buried. With a last long wail, like a sigh, a sigh of weariness, exhaustion and sorrow, the people gathered together, and the return procession was formed. This time they walked in silence, for the King was gone from them forever, and they were sorrowful. Some in the procession were silent through fear, perhaps, as well as sorrow, for the

word had long since gone forth that the King had been bewitched, and old Chituka, the witch-doctor, was making ready all his sticks and calabashes and poisons to catch and punish the criminals . . . And many among them wondered, in their fear, for the ways of Chituka were strange and his judgments were irrevocable.

Chiwahli was dead, and now for a few days Chituka was the great man of the royal village. He had been busy since the day before the burial constructing a small hut, a *m'pashi,* a resting place for Chiwahli's restless spirit on the outskirts of the village where he had ruled during his lifetime. On the thatch of the roof he fastened a small lion, an *Incalamo,* of straw to show that this was the shrine of the spirit of a chief, for often the spirits of chiefs take up their abodes in the bodies of lions. And in the hut he sprinkled mealie-flour, and poured out gourds of banana beer and a few handsful of tobacco on the floor and then danced in front of the house where the old chief on his wanderings in the twilight world might find rest and comfort in his own royal village.

But greater and more momentous things awaited the wisdom of Chituka, and when his task was done he returned to his own house to prepare for the witch-finding ceremony. He dressed himself in his full regalia, placing on his head the fur cap, the ceremonial badge of office, wrapping his body in the skins of animals and placing around his neck long strings of beads and shells. Then with moist chalk he traced

broad horizontal stripes like the ribs of a skeleton across his face and brow, and a broad vertical stripe across his forehead and down his nose. He gathered together his sticks and his potions, for the occasion was a great one, and he, Chituka, would be the center of interest, an object of fear.

He bethought himself of everything that could make the occasion more impressive, and finally came to me and asked for the loan of my chimpanzee, Johnny Boy. For chimpanzees were rare in these parts, and Chituka had a natural taste for the unusual as well as the dramatic. If I would lend him my monkey, he said, he would in turn arrange so that I could witness the ceremonies, and then I, a white man, would have the opportunity of seeing him, Chituka, in his full paint and regalia, avenging the bewitched Chiwahli with his magic and incantations.

It was a chance not to be missed, and I hastened to comply with his request. . . .

That night before dusk bands of spearmen, armed and dressed as for war, slipped out of the royal village of Chiwahli. East and west and south and north, wherever the brown beaten trails led through the veldt, through the bush and over the hills, they marched through the length and breadth of Chiwahli's domains. And the next morning when they returned, footsore and weary, there was a great squawking of chickens in the royal village, for they brought with them chickens in wicker crates, and these chickens belonged to the suspected witches. And now with the stirring call of the drum, the village roused itself from slumber and

flocked to the courtyard before the hut of the new King, who sat surrounded by his councillors. The warriors brought in their chickens and dropped them at the feet of Chituka. And the people stared and murmured, for beside his stick and his gourds and his skins and his stripes, a small chimpanzee squatted on the ground beside him and studied the sea of faces with watchful, attentive eyes.

The throng gathered around Chituka, a strange and sinister figure, muttering to himself and waving his sticks about, and wherever his eyes fell, in the dark sea of faces around him, there was a shrinking and a sense of fear, for those whom Chituka decreed to be witches, they knew, must die. Chituka fashioned a funnel from a small leaf, and seized a chicken from the crowd of fowl, clucking and pecking at his feet, and while the Mundalira held the chicken, he poured some poison from his gourd down the gullet. All stood rooted to the ground in fear and fascination, for if the chicken swallowed the poison and died, the spearmen would go out and search for the owner, for this was an infallible test, and the owner of the dead chicken had certainly bewitched the king, Chiwahli. And many chickens that morning were fed the strong potion from Chituka's gourd, for Chiwahli was a king and a mighty man, and no single man acting alone could have bewitched him. And the chickens that fell dead of the poison were seized by the waiting spearmen. Again in little bands they set forth, east and west and south and north by the trampled brown trails,

CHITUKA, THE WITCH-DOCTOR, ASSISTED BY JOHNNY BOY

OLD MAN LEFT TO DIE AFTER A WITCHCRAFT CEREMONY

to bring back the owners of the dead chickens, the men and women who had bewitched the king, Chiwahli . . .

And that night in the villages of the dead king, throughout the broad lands of Chiwahli, there was a sound of wailing and lamentation. But the hyenas and jackals and leopards feasted on the crushed and mangled bodies of witches, bound by thongs to the trees of the bush, and bleeding from many spear thrusts. . . .

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But still the effect of the death of the great king lay like a blight on the land, for now, within a few days of the hunting of witches and avenging of the king's restless spirit, the blaze of burning villages lit the night sky, and the columns of smoke rose high in the air and flattened themselves out across the rolling stretches of the veldt like a mist. For wherever the king's body had been borne, through his many villages during the funeral procession, his spirit might return.

And everywhere Chituka was in demand with Chiwahli's people to determine the new sites for their villages, for only in certain places may villages be built and only under suitable conditions. And Chituka responded to the call and went out with the homeless people, and wherever a site was found that seemed fit and convenient for a village he put a mound of flour on the ground and murmured over it the proper and necessary magic syllables. And then he left the people, telling them to examine the mound of flour next

morning. If it were scuffled or trampled by some animal or blown about by the wind, it would mean that some adverse spirits lingered in that place who did not want human company in their neighborhood. But if the mound of flour were intact in the morning they might proceed at once.

And Chituka, still in his full paint and regalia, went from place to place, a busy man and full of importance. He picked out the sites of many villages and many were near swamps and lowlands, for on the high and healthy highlands near at hand spirits wandered about and scuffled the flour he had laid down with the proper incantations. And Chituka's fees and possessions grew to enormous proportions and he brought his wives back goats and chickens in the evening. For one man's death is often another man's profit, and though that man be a king and leave a whole land in mourning, still a witch-doctor here and there may prosper by it.

BURNING CHIWALI'S HUT AFTER HIS DEATH

THE WITCH-DOCTOR IN ACTION

A *KAFUSHIA* FILLING IN CHIWALI'S GRAVE

BEATING A "WITCH" TO EXTORT A CONFESSION

VI

ANIMAL TALES AND FOLK LORE

JOHNNY BOY

Johnny Boy was born in the forests of the Kivu region. His round, bright eyes in a small black face, wrinkled and puckered like an old man's, looked out in a world of tall, solemn trees ranked like the pillars in the aisles of a cathedral. His long arms hung down, dangling to the ground. He looked out with a profoundly meditative expression on the forest world. When he was caught he surveyed his captors with more curiosity than fear in his bright little eyes, for he was then but six months old. The world was new and strange to him.

From the first it was apparent that we were to be friends. I looked at him and he looked at me. The puckers and wrinkles of his little old man's face gave it an air of meditation and thoughtfulness. Only the eyes were child-like and confiding. They wanted to say that everything was going to be all right; that we would understand each other; in short that we would be friends.

The jiggers—tiny insects the size of a pinhead—had worked their way under the nails of his toes and he cried with the pain at night. I took him to a native skilled in the art of extracting them and Johnny Boy underwent his first initiation in the pains of civilized living. He whimpered and his face drew up in tight wrinkles when the needle was plunged into the tender skin beneath the nails, but he made no move to bite

or snatch his foot away. He seemed to know what was going on and when the operation on the first foot was completed he held out the other. He gave a little cough of relief and shook his head when we had finished. His expression in his bright eyes seemed to say, "It was hell, but now it's over with."

We were on *safari* at the time, and Johnny Boy was carried out of the Kivu forests, the land of his fathers, in a small box on the head of a porter. At Lake Tanganyika, at the town of Usumbura, we made a halt. From the moment of his capture, Johnny Boy had resigned himself to the new conditions of life without either regret or foreboding. He was very tame so he was allowed to roam at large.

We had our headquarters at a small hotel, facing on the large market place where the natives of the town and surrounding country gathered for purposes of trade. The hotel consisted of one large dining room, a bar in the rear, and a verandah or sleeping porch where the beds of the guests were ranged close together in long lines. The tables in the dining room were covered with red cloths. It was here that Johnny Boy developed the great passion of his brief lifetime for any object, small or large, movable or immovable, animate or inanimate, that bore the color of the setting sun.

We were apprehended of this one day at lunch time. I had spent an hour previous in a futile search for Johnny Boy and had sat down a little concerned by his protracted absence. The other men at the table had already begun eating and my first intimation of

anything extraordinary was when the man opposite me clutched the edge of his dish and looked up with a puzzled expression on his face. I then observed that other dishes on the table were moving; that, in fact, the red table cloth was sliding out from under them. Someone yelled, "Stop!" but in another instant the knives, plates, forks and salt cellars started to roll off on the floor. The apparition of an animated red table cloth appeared moving across the dining room floor. The room was in a hubbub. Johnny Boy had wrapped the cloth around him shawl-wise, with one end dangling behind like a train. He disappeared through the door in a flutter of red and appeared again in the market place, scudding across the open space like a monstrous scarlet flower blown by a gale of wind.

His favorite haunt during our stay in Usumbura was the market place. Here, following the Arab custom, hundreds of natives gathered each day, squatting on their haunches before their baskets of ground mealie-flour, tobacco, mud fish from the lake, and sugar cane, or kept careful watch over their goats and chickens. They struck up bargains with the porters who straggled in day after day with the endless *safaris* which had made their way through jungle and veldt to Usumbura. In the dry season a powder of dust hung everywhere. Cries of buyers and sellers rose; black arms shot up in protest or assent; white teeth flashed and the dust rose in clouds from the surge of bare feet. And on the edge of this confusion sat Johnny Boy, a small bundle of brown meditation.

His eyes, even at that age, were capable of discerning small objects at a long range and he always sat and peered for a long time before engaging on any decisive adventure. If he found his favorite food, tomatoes, in one of the collection of baskets at the opposite side of the market, he sat for some time with his forefinger laid across his forehead, in expression of deep thought. The natives eyed him askance, knowing that he was white man's property. And since most of them had never seen a chimpanzee before they were puzzled. It was not quite apparent to them whether he was a small man or an animal.

But Johnny Boy helped make up their minds for them. His meditations came to a close abruptly. He dropped his weight forward to the knuckles of his hands and with a hoarse yell, between a child's scream and a dog's bark, charged full tilt into the crowded market. He was making a bee-line for the tomatoes and pandemonium ensued. The crowd parted and formed a noisy gesticulating throng behind him. He jumped into a basket of mealie-flour and began to scatter it about in handsful. The dark owner of the basket who had been brooding slumbrously over his calabash jumped up with a yell and fell over backwards. The crowd started in pursuit of the marauder, and Johnny Boy whisked around suddenly in a counter charge, scattering them to right and left before he turned to make a bee-line for the tomatoes again. The man behind the mealie-flour vendor stepped into a basket of eggs trying to get out of the way of whatever was coming, and the owner of the eggs set up a

protracted howl. Women on the fringe of the crowd screamed. The center of the market was seized with panic, and the black vendors dashed into each other trying to escape. The tomato vendor took to his heels and disappeared, in a small cloud of dust, down a side street. Only Johnny Boy kept his head.

He proceeded to the baskets of tomatoes and picked up all he could carry. Some he put in his mouth, others under his chin, arms and between his thighs. He never hurried during these operations, apparently confident that he would not be molested. He returned at a leisurely pace, loaded with spoils like a small boy after a raid on an apple orchard. His triumphant return was followed in a few moments by renewed pandemonium from the market place, and shortly thereafter by a troop of natives who pressed up to the hotel to enter their claims for damages with the white owner of Johnny Boy. . . . It was costly fun, and Johnny Boy had to be tied up.

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From Lake Tanganyika Johnny Boy proceeded by boat along the upper Congo. His box, covered with wire netting, was placed on the lower deck of the steamer. Here the natives congregated, for the upper deck with its cabins was reserved for the white men. They slept in the open, huddled up with the meager bundles of their possessions, a few blankets, some tinware, perhaps, and fragments of calico to take with them into the wilderness after their visit to the white man's settlement. Johnny Boy's cage was never closed, and he assumed the freedom of both decks,

and, in a short time, of the entire steamer. He was inquisitive but amiable, and made friends quickly.

A month or two before, I had given Johnny Boy a small square of blanket to wrap himself up with at night in his box when it was cold, and he had acquired a habit of modesty. Wherever he went, the blanket always accompanied him. When he was climbing and using his hands, he dragged the blanket with him between his toes. When he hopped along the deck, he dragged it in one hand, trailing behind him. When he paused to make friends with anybody or to inquire as to the nature of a new person or object, he wrapped himself up in it modestly, or kept it under his arm. And while roaming around the steamer his eyes always wandered to the lower quarters where the natives hung their bright-colored blankets to air over the rail. He was very regular in his habits, rising with the sun and returning to his box as soon as the first shadows struck across the reaches of the river. Beyond feeding, he needed no attention or care. If you came to his box at night with a lantern, however, he would open his eyes, gaze up at you and give a hoarse little bark, like a chuckle, to show that he was all right but appreciated your attention.

One morning of the voyage, Johnny Boy rose very early. The sun was up. So were the natives. The blankets were already arranged over the side, and Johnny Boy spotted his heart's desire, a red one. Its owner, a dark lady whose sole dress, possession and ornament it happened to be, was absent in another part of the ship. Johnny Boy reflected a moment,

JOHNNY BOY IN VARYING MOODS

sized up the situation, and proceeded at once to action.

In one jump, he cleared the intervening space between his cage and the rail, and seized the red blanket. The owner, just then returning, shrieked. Johnny Boy wrapped the blanket around him, his little body almost disappearing in its folds. There was an instant commotion on deck. Johnny sprang for the steps and climbed to the white man's quarters, where no natives, he thought, could pursue him. But this time a blanket was at stake, and the owner was desperate.

She chased the disappearing apparition in red along the deck and down the gangways. Johnny rushed for the saloon and hurried down the stairs. His pursuer followed, shrieking. The ship was aroused. Doors opened here and there along the deck, and heads were poked out. Voices babbled down the corridors, inquiring the cause of the confusion. Johnny Boy raced ahead of the tumult, howling and whimpering with fright and excitement, the red blanket streaming behind him. He jumped down the stairs again and ran for the bow of the boat, his pursuer still hot on his trail. He ran out on the sprit, a narrow pole, projecting forward from the bow, and the pursuit was brought to a halt. Johnny Boy sat at the end of the pole, clutching the red blanket, jabbering excited defiance. . . . A crowd of natives had gathered and he was still jabbering at them when I arrived on the scene.

He was both ashamed and aggrieved when I called him in from the bowsprit and made him give up the

blanket. I spoke to him. He clapped his hands together as he had seen the natives do and saluted, and then returned to his box. A little later he reappeared on deck, dragging his own blanket behind him. His expression was solemn and faintly mortified, but he cheered up when I gave him a banana.

His love for blankets, curtains, bits of cloth, anything that he could wrap around him, was almost incredible. He would spot a bit of cloth on a clothes line a half a mile away, and lay clever plots for getting to the place and seizing it. When he came into a house with rugs on the floor, he turned a few somersaults and wrapped the carpets around him. But his greatest prize and possession was the piece of blanket I had given him. This he took with him by day and wrapped around him at might. He never parted with it until his dying day.

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In Rhodesia, we went to live on a small ranch—an orange grove. Here in July, the winter season, the uplands are cold at night. Johnny Boy's box was put in the kitchen by the warm stove. It was safer here, for there were lions in the country round about.

His day began when the cook boys came in to stir up the fire and make the breakfast tea. He climbed out of his box with his blanket over his shoulder, and sat down close to the stove, keeping a careful eye on all the cooking operations.

When my boy started off toward my tent with a tray of tea and biscuits, he put the blanket under his arm and followed closely. Half way to the tent, he

would grab hold of the boy's leg and hold tight, yelling excitedly and trying to reach the tray with his long arms. The boy, frightened, would jump up on an overturned box with Johnny Boy clinging to his legs so as to raise the tray out of his reach, and Johnny would proceed to swarm up his back. The boy's loud calls for assistance were often the first sounds to break in on my slumber. When I appeared before the tent, Johnny saluted apologetically, and then returned to the kitchen to fetch his tin drinking cup from his box. He was inordinately fond of tea and coffee.

Returning to my tent again, he sat eyeing me disconsolately for perhaps ten minutes, putting his finger in his cup and tasting the tea. Then, as I made no move to offer him milk and sugar, a look of anger and disgust came into his face. He dipped his feet in the cup and began washing them around in it. He was disgusted. I had given him wash to drink, not tea. Suddenly he emptied the cup on the floor, dashed out of the tent, and began to howl. When I followed him, he was lying on his back on the ground, kicking and waving his arms, and yelling like a spoiled infant.

From breakfast until noon, Johnny Boy passed the hours with Juliasiya, a child of eight, who received the high wage of three pennies a day for looking after him. They were excellent friends, and close companions, but Johnny Boy was not above taking occasional advantage of a friend. He devised various tricks for outwitting Juliasiya and getting away from him. Juliasiya was small and round, and an adept at the art of turning somersaults, and in this display of

prowess, Johnny encouraged him by imitation. He always watched for a chance to edge away from Juliasiya toward a corner of the house beyond which lay a vegetable garden and a bed of tomatoes, and Juliasiya frequently looked up from his exercises to find his charge had disappeared entirely. He always knew where to look for him, but by the time Johnny Boy was caught he had stuffed himself with the ripe, juicy fruit that was with him the great passion of his short lifetime.

At hide and seek, a popular game with Johnny Boy and his guardian, Johnny Boy usually won, for his sharp eyes would search out Juliasiya anywhere, in the leaves of the shrubbery or in the high grass outside the orchard. And Johnny Boy's jungle instincts came to his help when his turn came. He would climb into the top of a tree and watch Juliasiya from the protection of the heavy foliage. Juliasiya had to give it up for there were too many trees in the orchard. And so he would hide near the tomato bed, full knowing that in one way or another Johnny Boy would manœuvre to get there.

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In the afternoon, Johnny Boy spent his time sitting beside Juliasiya on the verandah. There, when the sun was high, he seemed to sleep, his chin fallen on his chest, but always with one eye open for any possible mischief in the offing. His greatest delight was to watch for some unsuspecting native to pass and, reaching out suddenly, to grab his legs. When his victim jumped or yelled with fright, Johnny Boy would throw

himself on his back, laughing and coughing until he had to rub his sides. White men he never molested. It was as though he felt that he was under their special protection, and that it was therefore necessary to treat them with as much respect as his nature permitted. As he sat on the porch his eyes were always quick to detect the dust of an approaching *safari,* and his chattering quickly spread the glad news that visitors were coming. Whenever a white man stopped in front of the gate he would go out to meet him, stretch out a hand, and escort him to the shade of the verandah.

At times, when Johnny Boy became unruly, I punished him by putting him on the steps of the verandah and ordering him to sit there quietly. The verandah opened into a large living room, and here I could pretend to busy myself as if I had forgotten all about him. Johnny Boy would turn his head from time to time to watch what I was doing. The room was at the corner of the house, and there was a side door opening into the compound. I would sneak out of the room, quietly, so that Johnny Boy could not hear me, and hide by the corner of the house where I could watch him without being observed. He would turn and look into the room, and when he failed to find me there, move down a step or two cautiously. Then he would come back to the top step where he had been told to sit, turn his head slyly and look into the room. Not seeing me there, he would begin again to descend the steps cautiously, this time reaching the third step before he climbed up again. Finally he came to the

last step and touched the ground; then climbed up again hastily and gave an anxious look inside the room. Convinced that I had gone, he would scamper down the stairs quickly and make off toward his beloved tomato patch, taking the shortest route possible, around the corner of the house where I was hidden, for the way on the other side was barred by a number of outbuildings. When he came around the corner, I stepped out, and seeing me he came to a sudden halt. His face took on the expression of a musical comedy villain detected in a crime, and then, suddenly, as if the humor of the situation were too much for him, he would look at me, laugh, slap himself and shake his head. He never waited for my command, but would turn and run back to the top step and shake his head, as if to say, "Well, it's too much for me. I was beaten after all."

With the children of the compound, he was always on terms of friendly intimacy, and took part in all their games. If their antics were sometimes difficult for him to imitate, he always did his best, the puckers of his strange, old man's face set in an expression of grave determination. When the natives sat around in the compound after their labors in the orchard, he would drag his blanket out, now and then, and squat down solemnly on the ground beside them. Then they would shake their heads, looking at him, not quite sure who or what he was: "He is much like us," they would say, "but we don't know who he is."

He was not afraid of the dark as human children are, but for some objects he had a strange and very

definite repulsion. One day I took the horns and jawbone of an antelope and laid it in his box, on his blanket. He whimpered a little at the sight of them, but his attachment to his blanket was stronger than his fear. He walked around to study the ground from all angles. It was apparent that he was afraid to touch the bones. Suddenly he grabbed the blanket by a corner and whisked it away. The horns and jawbone fell out of the box. He picked up the blanket, jumped in, and covered himself with it. His eyes, staring up at me, had a look of injury and indignation. He wanted to tell me that the trick I had played was not a nice one, and that good friends didn't treat each other that way.

As a rule, Johnny Boy arose with the sun and retreated to his box as soon as the shadows of night gathered over the orchard. Once in his bed, with his little blanket clutched to him, he curled himself in a tight ball and never stirred until dawn. But he never lingered a moment after the sun was up, jumping over the box-edge with surprising alacrity to begin his daily routine of good-natured mischief, and one day he lay in bed with his blanket clutched to him tightly and seemed unable to stir. It was an unusual procedure, and the boy who brought me the news jabbered excitedly. He knew that the white men were fond of Johnny Boy, and he dreaded the consequences if anything were to happen to him.

When I came into the room where Johnny Boy slept, he was still lying in his box. He looked up at me and began to cough feebly, and I could see that he was

very sick. His legs seemed to be paralyzed, for he tried to raise himself on his arms. I took him out of the box, carried him out into the sunshine and gave him some whiskey. He shook his head and refused to swallow it at first, but it seemed to revive him, for he got up and ran to a stream of water near the orchard and washed out his mouth to take the taste away. We thought that he was better and would recover.

But the next day, he refused again to rise. Plainly Johnny Boy was in a serious condition. He could move his arms only with the greatest difficulty. He looked up at us pitifully, begging for help, and we looked back at him, moved as though it was a sick child that lay there. His eyes seemed to say, "Can't you do something for me—for my pain?" But we had no medicine and no doctor, and he made us feel our helplessness.

On the third day he woke up, and his little eyes, usually bright and restless, were filmed and heavy. He was quite blind and seemed to have difficulty in breathing. I thought that by making him cry I could force some air into his lungs, and I took his blanket away from him. His hands, groping up for it, were like the hands of a blind and feverish child. He cried, and, with his weak arms tried to salute as he used to when he wanted something, and then tried to clap his hands together in the gesture he had learned from the natives. I laid the blanket around his shoulders, he clasped it tight to his chest in both hands and still clutching it, he died.

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We wrapped Johnny Boy in the little blanket that had meant so much to him, and the natives dug a hole. We placed him in it gently, and laid in a layer of dirt and scattered poisoned fowl above it to keep off the hyenas. We stood by the grave, men who had lived for a long time in the veldt and had shot much game there, and none of us dared raise our eyes to gaze on the face of another.

THE UNDOING OF LORNA DOONE

Men who have passed a long time in wild places are subject to changes of which they themselves are scarcely aware. The complex inhibitions of civilized living fade in the face of the vast and prolific laxity of nature. Essentials emerge and traits and blemishes of character stand out clearly. Then we say the man has reverted to type. And so it was with Lorna Doone, the greyhound.

She was the most distinguished dog of our pack, in ancestry and in appearance. Her face was as thin and delicate as the hand of a well-born lady. She was bred for the garden and drawing room, and in England, her home, she had been surrounded with love and attention. The children of the great house across whose polished floors she stepped so delicately, moving from tapestried drawing rooms to long salons or pausing to turn her head and lift one foot gracefully at the sound of approaching footsteps, were cautioned never to play with her roughly. Even her master treated her with circumspection and dignity.

The other dogs of our pack were clumsy mongrels, and of a mongrel one does not expect too much. He is just dog, we say. If he bites we punish him and are sorry for him. He was really a good fellow, we think, and didn't mean it. But to see Lorna Doone revert to the primitive in the veldt was like watching some fine young lady shed her powder and ribbons in

the jungle, file her teeth and take up with some promising young chieftain.

It is a well-known fact that evil company corrupts the best of manners, and how much of Lorna Doone's fall from grace was due to the mixed and uncultured society she fell into in Africa, must remain in doubt. For our pack was a mixture of everything from "Bonzo" with his head of a collie and body of a bulldog, to the two lion dogs, Buller the First and Buller the Second, crosses between St. Bernards and Great Danes, standing as high as small Shetland ponies.

And the disintegrating process must have been already well begun on the way down, for to celebrate her arrival in Africa by announcing a complete change of code and standards of conduct, Lorna Doone gave birth to three mongrel puppies. These, as though totally unaware of their mother's distinguished lineage and careful breeding, joined the pack as soon as they were able to use their long legs without toppling over, as its noisiest and most excitable members.

But there were other facts as well in the undoing of Lorna Doone, first and foremost of which was the veldt, its strange scents and still stranger voices. For though Lorna Doone had been bred to the country, it was the country of well-kept parks and carefully tended estates, where the only wild animals were the fat, sleek squirrels who looked as though they had been fed and brushed every morning by the gardeners. And even these tame specimens of wild life Lorna Doone had been constrained to have nothing to do with by express prohibition of her mistress.

As far as other dogs were concerned, before her fall from grace, Lorna Doone was quite aware that there were class distinctions and proprieties to be observed. She had stood at the high iron gate of the park, with one foot daintily raised, and examined with soft, attentive eyes the dogs of the neighborhood who occasionally trooped past in a noisy, excited throng. But she had never shown any inclination to join in their vulgar amusements beyond the point of eyeing them circumspectly and noting their antics with curiosity. Even the children who played under the tall, solemn trees on the lawn in a dapple of sun-pools and shadows during the long summer afternoons when the gnats were so annoying, seemed to her a little undignified and noisy. She preferred the attentive ways and refinements of older people who spoke in gentle voices and moved slowly, and the conviction had been bred in her through observation that whatever was worth doing in the world was worth doing quietly and gracefully.

In winter, she ate her meals in the kitchen, following at the heels of a solemn footman who called her in from the drawing rooms and ushered her through the servants' quarters with every mark of respect. In the summer, her mistress often served her, bringing her food in a plate and setting it down on the mossy carpet under a beech tree on the lawn. At night she curled up in a large basket filled with cushions in her master's dressing room, and here she slept with her head on her paws, never stirring until dawn crept through the chinks in the shutters.

Buller the First and Buller the Second were the products of South African breeding, trained to distinguish the lion scent from that of all other animals; heavy and muscular fighters. Bonzo, too, had been brought up on the veldt, and had picked up a trick or two on his own account.

He had observed while still a youngster, given to stalking the small ground animals through the high grass of the veldt, that the antelope, when startled, jumped straight into the air to get a quick sense of direction before darting off for safety. This trick he had learned to perfection, and it stood him in good stead during the later depredations of the band under the leadership of Lorna Doone.

And the pack had already tasted fresh blood when Lorna Doone and her three growing puppies joined it, for there were many goats in the native villages and they were not—as the lion dogs had discovered—very difficult to kill, even when the natives were guarding them. Such activities as these Lorna Doone disdained at first, as too ruffianly for a person of breeding. She kept her distance from the two Bullers and Bonzo, and gave them to understand by her behavior that she was a person of some importance. And it was her environment in the veldt, perhaps, more than her vulgar associates that occasioned her gradual downfall.

The first mark of the change that was coming over this drawing room lady was a restlessness that drew her out of the house, whenever she could escape from it at night, to the fence that protected the compound

from the veldt, and its wild, roving marauders. She proceeded cautiously across the fenced-in space, pausing often with one forefoot raised, her ears pricked forward, listening to the strange symphony of voices and sniffing the odors that drifted in from the wild on the even breeze of the night. At the very edge of the compound she paused again to sniff at the ground below the fence. Now and again she would straighten and quiver, with her body tense and alert to some subtle intuition of danger. She came back to the house whining and whimpering in a strange, excited fashion, and the other dogs, the two great Bullers and the strange, clumsy Bonzo were stirred from their peaceful slumbers and began to move about the house restlessly. Soon she had them out in the yard, following her as she circled the fence, barking excitedly and encouragingly. And then one night after dark, the whole pack disappeared through some hole in the fence that Lorna Doone had discovered and the routine of their nightly excursions under Lorna Doone's leadership was begun.

They returned about daybreak from that first essay into the wilderness, a battered, bedraggled-looking crew, a little afraid of meeting the eyes of their masters and Buller the Second and Bonzo held in their jaws bones of some animal they had tracked through the veldt and killed. They laid the bones down in front of the doorstep of the house, as though to appease us with this mark of their triumph, and then stretching themselves lay down wearily and slept the sleep of the exhausted.

Lorna Doone, the well-cared-for and dainty, would no longer eat cooked food, and her aversion from anything she herself had not helped to kill quickly spread to the rest of the pack. At night when we were in camp they moved around restlessly, just outside the circle of the firelight, barking and whining in response to the animal voices that crept through the gloom around them, and challenging the night with their eyes. Even the growing puppies had caught the hunting fever, and followed their mother closely. And whenever Lorna Doone started off, a streak of grey in the moonlight, the whole pack followed in full cry after her.

The three pups ran along bravely, and Bonzo followed behind them, as sort of a rear guard for the advance contingent, while the lion dogs, heavy, muscular, and slow followed in the second section. The tall grass of the veldt, with the moonlight flooding over it, concealed them from view. They moved on through the tall grass, pausing now and then, Lorna Doone still in advance, her dainty ears pricked forward, her silken coat glistening in the moonlight. At the slightest rustling in the grass around them Bonzo would take his sudden spring in the air to reconnoitre, as he had seen the antelopes do. The rear guard would pound up from the rear, clumsy, and out of breath, and the band would spread out fan-wise, noses to the earth, searching out the scent of some beast which had passed this spot earlier in the night.

And Lorna Doone, the quickest on the scent as on her feet, would dart off again, her three puppies chas-

ing madly after her, the huge lion dogs yelping their protest whenever they were too far outdistanced. Nothing that the veldt could be made to yield was too dangerous for the pack under Lorna Doone's competent guidance. Hyenas and jackals were easy game, and one night they surrounded an elephant which had strayed from the rest of the herd. They closed in on him from all sides, snapping and snarling, driving the beast into a frenzy until he stood at bay, trumpeting with rage. They closed in on their monster prey again, the dainty Lorna Doone on the outskirts, guarding her puppies and encouraging the mighty Bullers and Bonzo, and held him at bay until we were aroused.

Leopards, the pack finished by themselves, although the two Bullers were often almost finished in the process. They stormed upon their prey, the greyhound running in advance, her nose close to the earth. As soon as she stopped, the rest of the advance guard deployed around her, surrounding the beast. The voices of Buller First and Buller Second sounded throatily in the darkness behind them. They were coming, the great killers, all out of breath, and until they came and had a moment to rest and draw breath, the leopard must be held at bay. Lorna Doone and her followers edged in closer, snapping and snarling, scattering whenever the leopard charged, returning to the fray immediately. The howls of the rear guard drew closer, and suddenly they dashed out of the shadows, and lay down for their allotted moment of rest. Then the attack began from all sides. The killers leaped on the leopard's back, the smaller dogs flew to the rear,

and Bonzo fastened on the throat. There was a frantic struggle in the darkness; a swirl of writhing forms in the trampled grass under the soft clear moonlight. Still the pack clung to its prey, the Bullers and Bonzo sinking their fangs to the bone. The snarls of rage and pain grew fainter; the leopard sank down exhausted. There was a sound of ripping flesh and crunching bones as Lorna Doone, the drawing room lady, and her followers sat down to their evening meal.

Nothing from monkeys to lions escaped the notice of the pack during these midnight hunting parties. But gradually the band thinned out.

Buller the Second was the first to pay the supreme penalty for his boldness, at the hands of a large baboon. Near the orchard of the ranch where we were stopping at the time, a cliff rose, a sheer, perpendicular wall, over a hundred feet in height. Since the baboons were inordinately fond of oranges, the owner had arranged a number of traps, hoping to catch some of the marauders and frighten the rest. He had filled a number of calabash gourds with shelled nuts, and fastened them by long lines to the tree branches. The necks of the gourds were narrow, so that the baboons could run a hand into them but could not pull it out if he grasped the nuts. The baboons caught in this manner were either shot by the ranch owner in the morning or killed by the dogs; but one morning Buller the Second had the bad fortune to surprise a crowd of baboons still roving in the orchard. He sprang at one of them, howling. The baboon died and so did Buller. When we arrived on

the scene both lay stretched on the ground, side by side, Buller with his teeth in the baboon and the huge monkey clutching the dog's throat with fingers that had tightened in the death-clasp.

Bonzo died a few weeks later, the victim of his own curiosity. He had developed a mania for chasing snakes, and the game, in the end, proved disastrous. He knew that the best way to kill a snake was to grab it by the neck, just behind the dangerous head, and shake until the snake was dead or until one of the orchard workers had come up to despatch it with a stick. And Bonzo developed an expertness in his art that was amazing. But one day he went too far, and after pursuing a snake to its hole stuck his nose in to investigate further. And Bonzo was dead in half an hour. . . .

The pack grew thinner, as warrior after warrior dropped from the ranks, and the nightly raids had to be forcibly curtailed. Lorna Doone, watched by day and kept in the house at night, grew sleek and silky again, but her body showed the honorable scars of many terrible battles. She slept in the kitchen now, but always she slept fitfully, her fine ears pricking up at every sound that drifted in from the great, wild open that flowed off from all sides of the compound. And now and then she would rise and stir, as though haunted by some nightmare memory of those long nightly depredations when she had led a raiding band to the fray, in the stark desolation of the moon-struck veldt. She would wander around the house, barking and whimpering, scratching at the doors, to get out

into the night and the wild that she longed for. . . .

That was life out there, her strange, soft eyes seemed to say, and this confinement, this warmth and security—this was nothing but the civilization she had known once, long ago, and didn't somehow belong to.

At night when the *safari* comes to rest, when the tents are pitched and the cookfires burn like great red blossoms in the rank wildness of the veldt, the porters drop their loads and build their own fires, many of them, close together, as protection against the prowling wild beasts. Their camp is always down wind from the white man's, for the smell of their bodies is heavy and fetid, cloying the cool night air. But still the sound of their voices, murmuring, chanting, chattering and laughing, drifts back to the tents of the white man, long after his fires have sunk on their embers. The tales they tell as they sit there are old, old as the distant hills that loom formidable and shadowy against the starlight. But no tale is too old for repetition, and no detail of any tale may ever be left out or omitted, for Lala literature is written on the minds of the people from generation to generation and not in books.

The voices, punctuated by the animal cries from the night beyond the glow of firelight, rise and fall in a gentle murmur, until at last one single voice catches up the thread of some time-honored narrative, and then the sing-song tale, broken by "Ohs" and "Ahs" and interruptions begins. Perhaps it is the story of the creation, or the story of how the elephant got his tail, or the story of the Lion, the Snake and the Virgin.

THE LION, THE SNAKE, AND THE VIRGIN

Once upon a time there was a man named Wundeysha, and this man had been a mighty hunter. He had killed in his youth and prime many magnificent animals, including elephants, leopards and lions. He had grown old, and though he could no longer throw the spear so far nor strike to the heart with his arrows, the love of the chase still lingered on in him.

His wives, of course, knew that Wundeysha was old and should no longer venture alone in the veldt and they shook their heads when they spoke of it: "For he is foolish," they said, "foolish with years and the dreams of his youth." And they would shake their heads again and mutter. They knew that men cared naught for advice but did as they pleased and made their women suffer for it afterwards.

One day Wundeysha left the village taking with him his old spear, his bow and a quiver of arrows. He followed the trail that led across the veldt and suddenly came upon the spoor of a lion. From the tracks it had made in the dust, it was a large lion, and since those tracks were fresh it must have passed the way Wundeysha was going.

Now although many men together may kill a lion, for one man, even in the prime of his hunting years to venture against him, is foolhardy, and Wundeysha was no longer in his prime. So he stopped for a while and reflected. He would go back to the village and tell the young men that Incalamo was in the veldt

nearby, and they would come out in a party with lion spears and kill him. And just as he was rising to his feet the lion sprang out from a bush upon him.

If Wundeysha had not been nimble, even in his old age, the lion would have landed on his shoulders and killed him then and there. As it was, he just missed him and landed on all four feet a pace or two away. He looked at Wundeysha and Wundeysha looked at the lion, and the lion began to speak.

"Ahhrr," he said, and lashed his tail, and "Ahhrr," he said again. "Wundeysha, you were going to kill me. And in your youth you killed many of my brothers and sisters. It is well that this is so, for everyone has his day. And now I am going to kill you, Wundeysha, and eat you."

He growled again "Ahhrr," like that, and lashed his tail.

Now though Wundeysha was old and his muscles were flabby, his mind was very alert and active. The lion had hardly stopped growling when he began to speak. He spoke in a brave voice, very loudly, as though he were talking to a friend or one of his wives at home in the village. And as he spoke he pretended to smile.

"Oh," he said, and nodded his head. "What you say is very true, and now I see what I never saw before that the Incalamo is a very wise animal. I have always known that he was the strongest of animals and the fiercest and now I see that he is the wisest."

He spoke that way to give himself time and also because he thought it might flatter the lion. And the

lion began to shake his tail more slowly. So Wundeysha went on.

"Ah," he said, "I see now how wise the lion is, for what he says is true and just. And the lion could eat me as I stand here just as well as not. But I am just wondering whether that would show the lion's wisdom or his foolishness, for I am an old man, after all, and full of bones."

He went on talking just as though he had the good of the lion and not his own welfare at heart, and the lion looked pleased and softened. Wundeysha said very cunningly:

"And now that I think of it, only a lion that was not so sure of his strength and his wisdom would eat an old man with nothing but bones in his body, for why should a lion eat an old man when there are plenty of young ones? An old man like me would lie heavy in the lion's stomach, and afterwards the lion would lie on his side and groan with pain." He shook his head, still gazing at the lion. "A young lion, sleek and well fed should never bother to eat an old man, for the other lions would laugh at him if he told them about it. What a young lion sleek and handsome needs is not a meal from old man's bones, but a soft and tender wife. And now that I think of it, I know just the wife for a lion."

"Ahhrr," growled the lion, well pleased, "and who is this wife for a lion?"

"She is my daughter," said Wundeysha, "and she lives at home in my village."

"Ahhrr," growled the lion, and his eyes softened, "and how old is your daughter?"

"Her initiation is completed," said Wundeysha. "She is just now a woman. She is young and very beautiful. Just the wife for a lion. And if I lie, you can kill me later."

So the lion followed Wundeysha through the veldt and when they came in sight of the village, Wundeysha said:

"Wait here outside in the bush, and I will go in and inform my daughter of the great happiness that is coming to her."

Wundeysha said this because although he doubted that his daughter would consider it a great good fortune to have a lion for a husband, he still wished to keep the lion pleased and flattered. And when he had come to his hut, Wundeysha called for his daughter. His wives were at work, in the fields, and so there was no one at hand to overhear them. Wundeysha said to his daughter:

"I am an old man, of course, and no longer very valuable but I love my life and cling to it. While I was hunting in the veldt today a lion sprang from the bush at me and threatened to devour me. He was a young lion, sleek and handsome, and while I know that you may have had other plans and that this is rather sudden, still I think you could hardly choose a better husband."

Wundeysha's daughter looked at him, trembling, for although she was very young, hardly a woman, she had been looking at the handsome son of the chief of

the village, and she knew that he had been looking at her. And she said:

"But why should I marry this lion? I would be afraid even to have him near me."

Her father shook his head sadly.

"I am old," he said, "but still I love my life and if you do not marry him the lion will eat me." And he shook his head again, pitifully, so that his daughter, Kunda, was sorry for him. And so to save her father, Kunda married the lion. They settled down together in a new hut that Kunda's father built for them. And there at night, lying beside the lion, Kunda dreamed of the chief's son, who was handsome and whose eyes had followed her.

. . . . . .

Wundeysha's wives, when they heard of this, shook their heads:

"We thought so," they said. "We thought so all along. For he is an old man and dreams foolishly about his youth. Well, we told him no good would come of it from the beginning. But it is little use for us to argue with him about it, for men are always that way," they said, "and always will be."

And so they were not in the least surprised when Wundeysha began sharpening his spear and his knives for the hunt again. They shook their heads and muttered together, but what could you do with a man like Wundeysha? When he started out alone early one morning into the veldt they knew no good would come of it.

But Wundeysha was light-hearted, and felt his

youth rising in him again. Around him were the rolling plains, just now green after the winter rainfall. The muddy rivers ran swiftly, and the water holes were full to the brim with water that sparkled in the sunshine. The earth was fresh and new, and he felt that freshness calling to him. He walked far into the veldt and toward noon sat down under a tree to rest and sleep. And sleeping, he felt something gripping his limbs and coiling slowly about him. He awakened with a start, but Lukungwe, the snake, already had wrapped his heavy coils around him, and Lukungwe's small, flat head lay on his breast, while his flat little eyes, like specks of black mica, stared up at him, cold and unblinking.

"Hiss," said the snake, and darted out his little forked tongue, while the weight of his coils lay heavy and cold on Wundeysha's body. "Hiss," he said again. "Wundeysha, if you found me first you would have killed me. And in your day you have killed many of my brothers and sisters. It is well that this is so, for everyone has his day, and now I am going to tighten my coils around you and kill you."

And he began to wrap his long body around Wundeysha more tightly until the old man's eyes started out of his head. He said, "Hiss" again, and darted out his wicked tongue. But Wundeysha managed to speak before the breath was entirely gone from him.

"Oh," he gasped, and nodded his head, still gasping. "What you say is very true, and although I have always heard that the snake was the wisest of animals

as well as the most beautiful, I had hardly thought that there was such wisdom in him."

He spoke this way, as he had spoken to the lion, to give himself time and because he thought that it might flatter the snake. And the snake's coils loosened a little on his body. So Wundeysha went on.

"But after all, to kill an old man is not so very wise when there might be other things to gain by letting an old man live. And why should a fine young snake kill an old man with no strength in him? For the other snakes would laugh at him if he boasted about it." Wundeysha shook his head. "What a fine young snake needs is not an old man so bony that he couldn't even be swallowed, but a soft and tender wife."

"Hiss," said the snake, and his flat little eyes glistened. "This sounds very interesting."

Wundeysha nodded his head as the snake's coils loosened.

"Oh, yes," he said, "that is just the thing for a young snake. A fine little wife, soft and tender."

"Hiss," said the snake, well pleased, "and where is such a wife to be found?"

"In my village," said Wundeysha, "she is my daughter, and lives in my village."

"Ah," said the snake and drew his forked little tongue in, "and how old is your daughter?"

"Her initiation is completed," said the old man, "and she is ripe and ready for marriage. She is young and very beautiful. And if I lie, you can kill me later."

So the snake followed Wundeysha across the veldt,

and when they had come within sight of the village, Wundeysha paused as if perplexed. He put his hand to his head and studied the ground, and then he began to scratch his head and mutter. The snake hissed impatiently.

"Let us go on, Wundeysha," he said, "for I have been thinking this long time while I was following behind you and I am eager to see your daughter."

Wundeysha murmured as a man who has forgotten something important:

"I had not thought of it when I spoke to you," he said, "but my daughter has already married a lion." He shook his head. "She is a wilful girl," he said, "and nagged me until I consented to her marriage with Incalamo."

"Ah," said the snake, "Incalamo is it? But that is easy after all. Let us go in and see your daughter, and for the rest of it, I will take care of Incalamo."

So Wundeysha went into the village, leaving the snake in the grass outside, to prepare his daughter, Kunda, for the unusual marriage which he had arranged for her. And Wundeysha's wives, seeing him coming staring at the ground in a dejected fashion, shook their heads and muttered to themselves. They knew that some misfortune had happened, just as they had prophesied it would but there was no use, they knew, in taking Wundeysha to task for it. So they merely stood aside and shook their heads when Wundeysha entered the hut to look for his daughter. He pretended to be pleased with himself and with her, for as he said, he had good news to tell her.

Wundeysha's daughter rose from the corner where she had been sitting, dreaming of the chief's handsome son, and stood before her father. She had no idea what the good news might be, and as she stood before her father she trembled.

"I have arranged," said Wundeysha, "to bring to an end your marriage with the lion, Incalamo, for I have been thinking that he is hardly a suitable husband after all."

Kunda was so overcome that she could not speak, but only looked at him. Now at last she would be free to take part in the dance with the chief's son, and she knew that he could not resist her. Her father went on:

"For while he is handsome, the lion, and very strong; while he brings in more fresh meat every night from the veldt than a dozen of our best hunters, still he is a little rough, a little too rough, for a girl as well brought up as you are.

"What you really want," said Wundeysha, "is a gentler and cleverer husband." He looked at his daughter and his eyes narrowed cunningly. "Now I wouldn't say a wildebeeste, for a wildebeeste while he is agile and handsome is too shy and timid. And the fox, although he is wise, is very unscrupulous, and the rabbit . . ."

Here Wundeysha in his cunning way, to prepare his daughter, went on to name a whole host of animals, with their virtues and disadvantages as husbands, and Kunda looked at her father stricken and full of sorrow. For why, she thought, should I have an animal

for a husband when the handsome son of the chief has been looking at me? But her father went on, not looking at her face but looking at the ground instead.

"So I finally thought the snake is the best of all." He pretended to brighten a little. "And it so happened on my way through the veldt today I found just the snake to make you a wise and gentle husband."

But Kunda said, "Why should I marry a snake when I have already one husband among the animals? And I do not want another."

Her father shook his head sadly, for he saw he must tell her the truth after all.

"I am old," he said, "but still I love my life and if you do not marry him, the snake will crush me to death." And he shook his head pitifully so that his daughter, Kunda, was sorry for him and finally consented.

Wundeysha went out to the edge of the village and told the snake that his daughter, Kunda, had consented. The snake waited until after dark had fallen and then crawled into the village and concealed himself on the roof of the hut where the lion and Kunda lived together. He concealed himself in the thatch just above the door and when the lion came out to hunt food in the veldt he dropped down and crushed him to death. So Kunda became the wife of the snake and lived with him in the hut where she had lived with the lion.

Now all this time, the chief's son who was tall and handsome, had had his eye on Kunda. He had

watched her when she worked with the women of the village, and saw that she was well made and slender. He watched her when she went for water, carrying the gourd on her head, and he noticed that her movements were graceful. And at night when he should be sleeping, he would awaken and think of Kunda; so that by day and night alike he was restless and discontented.

He had listened in silence when they told him that Wundeysha had married his daughter to a lion for he had thought that such a marriage could not last very long anyway. But when they came and told him that Kunda was married a second time and this time to a snake his anger rose up within him. For why, he thought, should Kunda's father give her to a snake, the most treacherous and hideous of animals, when I, a chief's son, young and handsome, wish her for myself? And so he went to Wundeysha and spoke to him angrily and Wundeysha looked at the ground and nodded, for he was very cunning.

"Alas," he said, "what can you do when you have a daughter like Kunda? She is so handsome that even the beasts of the veldt have heard about it and if I had not consented to these marriages with Incalamo and Lukungwe, they would have destroyed me and her as well."

He spoke this way to avert the wrath of the chief's son and also because he had made a plan and hoped that if it worked he could secure more from the chief's son in return for his daughter by telling her how the fame of her beauty had spread. So the chief's son

and Wundeysha talked together, and the young man promised the hides of many animals and the tusks of three elephants if Wundeysha would get rid of the snake and give him Kunda in marriage. And Wundeysha shook his head for he was very cunning, but he promised he would do his best, although the matter was difficult and dangerous.

Now it so happened that the colder weather was coming on and the nights were damp and chilly. And the snake who slept every night with Kunda complained of the cold. And Kunda told her father that the snake could not sleep at night, for the cold crept into the hut and made him shiver. And Wundeysha went that night to the snake and spoke to him.

"Ah," he said, "Lukungwe, my daughter tells me that you complain of the cold and since you are my son-in-law and here in the village under my protection, I would not for the world have this happen."

He went on to explain to Lukungwe how he had thought of this before-hand and had therefore, procured a large earthenware jar in which the snake could sleep during the winter.

"For," as he explained, "my daughter is anxious about you, like a good wife always thinking about her husband. And we can build a fire in the hut and put the pot on the fire. Then when you are coiled up inside of it, you will be warm through the night."

"Hiss," said the snake, darting out his little tongue, "but you are very thoughtful, and as for Kunda, I have found her a good wife and well worth the price I paid in letting you live."

So that night Wundeysha brought the big pot to his daughter's hut, and the snake crawled inside. When he was safely coiled in the bottom, Kunda clapped the lid on so he could not escape and put the pot on the fire. Then with Wundeysha to help her, she threw sticks on the fire until it broke into hot flames and the flames mounting set fire to the roof of the hut. The whole village came running to see Kunda's hut burning with Lukungwe, the snake, inside of it. And everyone was glad, being afraid of Lukungwe and the habit he had of lurking in dark places.

Only the wives of Wundeysha stood aside and shook their heads, for as they said, this was probably some new foolishness of the old man and you could never tell what trouble he was likely to get them all into the next minute. And as for the burning of the hut, they had known all along that no good had ever come of such foolishness or ever would. Only Kunda was happy, and that night she slept in her mother's hut, and word was sent through the village that the chief's son had come to see her aunt and was disputing with her the price of her purchase.

And so it was that Wundeysha escaped from the lion and the snake by marrying them to his daughter. And Kunda, who had saved her father, was taken by the chief's son to be his wife. A great feast was prepared and meat was given to everyone in the village. After two moons had waxed and waned the marriage was performed and Kunda and the chief's son lived happily ever after.

THE BOY WHO HAD NO EARS

"There was once," said Chimbakuma, "a mother and her boy and her people had died of starvation. And so she took her boy away to a hill and here she made a new home.

"When she went to work in the morning in the cornfield which she had planted, she left her boy on the round flat place on top of the hill, telling him to play there and not come down. But one day a rabbit came to the hill and stood below watching the boy at play, and the boy looked down at the rabbit.

" 'Come up and play with me here,' said the boy, 'for I am all alone.'

" 'Ah,' said the rabbit. 'The top of the hill is too small. Come down, and we will play here in the fields where there is more room for us.'

"So the boy disobeyed his mother and came down from the hill and they played together in the fields. But on the second day, when they were playing, a lion came and killed the boy and told the rabbit to put him in a pot and cook him for dinner.

"Now, although the rabbit was sorry to lose his playmate, the little boy, he was afraid of the lion, so he put the boy in a pot and made a fire underneath it, and made preparations for the lion's dinner. And the longer the little boy cooked, the better he smelled, until finally the rabbit opened the pot lid and looked in. He saw that the little boy was cooking nicely, and thought to himself:

" 'I'll just eat his ears. The lion will never notice it,

for I will put the lid back on again.' But when the lion came back and lifted the lid, he noticed that the boy's ears were gone and turned on the rabbit angrily.

" 'You have eaten the boy's ears,' he said. 'And now I am going to eat you.'

" 'Ah,' said the rabbit, cunningly. 'I didn't eat the boy's ears. For he had no ears, so how,' he said, 'could I eat them?'

"The lion growled.

" 'You are lying,' he said, 'and so I'm going to eat you.'

"But the rabbit argued cleverly for his life, and finally the lion consented to go to the hill and put the question to the boy's mother. And so they went to the foot of the hill where the mother lived and shouted up:

" 'Did your little boy have any ears?'

" 'No,' said the mother. 'For if my little boy had had ears he would have heard and obeyed me, and would never have gone down the hill. . . .' "

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Tales like these are the occasion for laughter, for many corrections and asides on the hearers' part, and for innumerable interruptions. No detail of the story is ever allowed to go untold, for Chiwahli men listen to the story for the story's sake, and not for its novelty. A tale twice told is all the better for the re-telling, and a story passed through the ages comes with the approval of many generations behind it, and its appeal is doubly strong.

Chiwahli tale-tellers will relate the story of why

the rhinoceros scatters his droppings and many other tales which explain why animals are what they are and why they behave as they do. In the case of the rhinoceros, it is perfectly simple and explicit. Many ages ago, they will tell you, the rhinoceros swallowed a needle and so for generation after generation he has been scattering his dung in a painstaking effort to find it.

VII

TALES OF THE WHITE MAN

FUGITIVE

In England he had been a miner and dissatisfied with his lot. It was after the war and labor was restless. He read in the paper about the superior advantages of life in South Africa. The colonies needed men, and in the colonies men were men and not the slaves of a wage.

He was an unimaginative person but certain things he felt could be taken for granted. In Wales you dug and sweated while the boss stood over you, grumbling. In Africa you were the boss and grumbled at the niggers. In England labor was poorly paid, for there were too many people crowded together on a small space of the earth. In Africa where spaces were vast, the worth of the individual was higher. That much stood to reason, and there were other things as well.

He had seen a booklet printed and distributed by an African mining company and the pictures were very attractive. They showed green stretches of the open plain, the flash of a river and the fringe of mountain in the background. They showed the bright, prosperous cities along the coast that had sprung up from poor beginnings. They spoke of the superior advantages in the matters of land, housing and rent. A man might buy a farm for the price of a half acre in Wales. Niggers would cultivate it for him and on his land he could build a house. Not a cottage such as miners lived in, but a house of red bricks with tall windows,

a slate roof and two or three chimneys. He could grow rich by throwing his mind and muscles into his work in the free spaces. He could come back with money in his pocket, and then any woman would be glad to have him and follow him back again to the land of promise. Or, if he didn't want to settle, there were vast tracts still, for the most part, unexplored; treasures of field and mine awaiting the grasp of the conqueror. There was room to stretch and move in, and, above everything else, there were others to do the dirty work while you reaped the profits.

He had a little money saved—enough to pay his passage. He took a steamer and endured some discomfort as they pushed south from an ocean that was blue and cool to an ocean that lay shimmering in the tense heat of the tropical sun. He landed in Cape Town and there took a train for Rhodesia.

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The mine where he reported for duty was some fifty miles from the rail head in broken country near the foothills of one of those ridges that had seemed so blue and alluring in the booklet. Here was the plain, the veldt as they called it, but it was not green. It lay parched, brown and quivering in the heat of the tropic mid-summer. There was the river, but it didn't flash. It jumped rapidly and noisily down from the hills and flowed off brown and sluggish as an overfed serpent across the land. Here was the space he had sought, wide and free, but pock-marked here and there with ugly scars. Raw bleaknesses of unfinished houses in little groups that had started as villages had ended as

nothing but discouragements. Near the mine head, a high-railed compound enclosed the round, peaked huts of the native workers, and the bare cottages of the white overseers with sheds and storehouses were scattered everywhere. The mine itself lay open and black like an old wound gashed in the rounded flank of the hill.

He spent a few days here and then moved further north. A new shaft had been sunk in a low spur of the Irumi foothills. It was a minor, experimental operation, and the man who had been in charge had quarreled with his niggers and laid down on the job. Here was a chance to test himself in the wilderness and prove himself a valuable man to his company.

He journeyed north for three days, on foot, through a region where the grass lay parched and brown in the valleys and the uplands were rocky and difficult underfoot. With him went three porters to carry his baggage and a "boy" to make his camp and cook for him.

He was a man used to having his own people around him and to hearing their voices. He was used to city streets with faces moving through them like scatterings of white paper blown by a wind. He was used to a countryside where barns and houses huddled close together and to villages where peaceful housefronts slumbered under the protection of ancient trees. And here he had the same feeling that had come over him on the first day of the ocean passage when he had stood by the rail of the ship watching the slate gray sea with gulls flying low across it. A sensing of his

own smallness. Even his dream of money and success seemed small and flat against the desolation of the restless gray space around him. But there, on the ship, had been faces and voices that were familiar; here the faces and voices were strange. At night when the fires were lit and his porters sat on the ground and talked together, their faces, as he watched, seemed as inscrutable as the darkness of the land around him. He even sensed a kinship between those faces and the land, a kinship that he could not share. They belonged here and he did not. The vastness and loneliness that made his soul shiver was of the very air that they and their fathers and their fathers' fathers had breathed. Around him in the darkness loomed dim night-shapes of rocks and trees. Beyond lay a shadowy hint of mountains and beyond the mountains there were the stars. He who had lived his entire life within the call of familiar things, the ringing of bells, the ticking of clocks, the beat and throb of machinery, the sound of wheels and footfalls,—felt the soundlessness of the night creeping over him.

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He had expected to be greeted, on his arrival, by a white man's voice, but for some reason his predecessor had already decamped leaving a few possessions behind him. A rude compound of pointed stakes had been erected near the pit-head and in this stood a small tent and the thatched *shambas* of the niggers. The tent was frayed at the flaps and the ropes were rotten. Handles of a few iron cooking utensils on which rust had settled beneath layers of grease and soot, stuck out

from underneath a sagging, battered cot. The man had also left behind an assortment of tinned foods in packing cases with the top boards ripped off, and a note attached to one of them written in a fisty pencil scrawl. It was brief, pointed and slightly ominous. It evidently referred to the "niggers" who had collected in front of their huts to stare at him with faces as blank as shingles when he had stumbled into the compound on the heels of his porters. ". . . sulky bastards," it read, "drive Hell out of them." Then followed a scrawl which he could not decipher. He crumpled up the note and threw it into the fire. But the note made him a little uneasy and he tossed on the broken cot for a long time before sleep finally overcame him that night.

He was alone; alone as he had never before been in his life. He was alone with half a hundred creatures who were probably men but neither spoke nor acted nor looked like any men he had ever seen. And they were "sulky." It might mean any number of things, that word, and as he thought it over with the night wind stealing in around him from the dark immensity of mountains, veldt and starlight outside, a small nameless fear came out of the night and crouched near the head of his bed, a fear he had never before known. It hovered over him, small, enigmatic, nameless, perhaps some emanation of this wild land in its wild night slumber. He turned over. Well, he would follow the advice for what it was worth. Those niggers had stared at him with strange, sullen eyes when he had entered the compound toward sunset. He had seen

too often on the faces of his porters that sullen expression—a threat, maybe, and he knew what he would do. He would drive them.

He rose in the early morning and went up to the pit head. He walked into the machine shed and saw that the steam was up on the donkey engine. He supervised the descent of the wooden elevator with its freight of niggers, dropping into the blackness beneath. He checked the loads as they were hoisted out of the shaft and dumped on the hand cars. He saw that the vein was thin as yet, and that they would have to dig a long while before they struck something really worth while. Once in a while he went below himself on a tour of inspection, and then his face took on a set, grim expression. No nigger alive was going to slip anything over on him. As time went on, they sensed him as a driver, a hard man to deal with. When they flinched or quailed before him a strange fury rose up in him and he wanted to drive his fists into their black sullen faces.

At night he walked down to his tent again. He had set his boy to digging a garden and building a fence around it. There were other improvements, too, a table and some chairs built of sticks and logs. Supper was ready for him and waiting. He washed his hands and ate in his shirt and overalls, odorous with sweat and dust from the mine. There was no use in changing your clothes for a bunch of niggers. After his meal he stretched out his legs and smoked his pipe. His chin settled gradually on his breast. In a sort of stupor he listened to the wild night symphony of the

veldt that rose around him, in snarls, in low hoots and the faint far-off yapping of the jackals.

Ten miles from the pithead there was a trading post and a number of ranches scattered over a wide, half-cultivated acreage. The post was to have been a large one. The front, facing on a primitive road where wagon wheels had bitten deep ruts in the mud and dust, was built imposingly of brick and dwindled into small wings on either side. It faced boldly across the heaving brown fields toward the blue foothills where his mine lay. He was astonished to find that it was a false front, that there was nothing much behind it.

It stood there, that cumbersome façade, like a significant mask, hiding the wreck of a face. The roof was only half completed and the interior was a ruin. Where the men had left off working on it the insects had begun. Wasps and spiders and beetles had made their homes in the unfinished walls. The white ants had moved on the foundations like an army and where they had eaten through below, the walls above opened in rents and fissures. There still remained roof enough to keep the sun and rain from the piles of goods-boxes and, in the untidy array of fallen roof beams and crumbling mortar, lived the two proprietors of this strange establishment.

As a newcomer he had been diffident about asking questions but he had noticed that the further north he went in Rhodesia, the more marked had become that certain atmosphere of neglect and procrastination. Ambitious ranches were laid out, imposing farm build-

ings were planned but the bricks ran out or the men grew tired and the insects set tirelessly to work. The French settlers, north in the foothills, lived with their trunks and boxes unpacked. When you asked them about this they shrugged. "Well," they would say, "could any man think of settling in a country such as this? Tomorrow we will move." Tomorrow came and found them still sitting amid an untidy litter of baggage. They were waiting for something. For what? No one ever know. But they were—waiting. For the African veldt held them in its grip, mysterious and fascinating.

And so it was at the post where he went once or twice a month to stock up on provisions, and at the ranches on the veldt around it. The imposing front, like a false face hiding the neglect and litter behind, was significant. But it was not, after all, astonishing. When he asked the traders about it, they shrugged. He could see for himself there were no more bricks. Did he think the sky would open and shower down building materials? But as soon as the weather cleared a little they were going to set to work to make some bricks. The weather cleared and no bricks were made. Perhaps they were waiting for straw. When the cracks in the walls grew too wide, they stuffed them with mud. Tomorrow they would plaster them properly. Tomorrow, they would begin to straighten things out. Tomorrow came, and tomorrow was the same as today and yesterday.

And walking back toward his solitary camp in the blue loneliness of the hills, he would think over these

things and shake his head. So that was the way things went here. Everyone had a hard luck story. Planters or traders, they all wandered through an endless dream. Their niggers worked for them and waited on them. They planted enough to keep them going, and next year, of course, things would take a turn for the better. Only the newcomers were fussy. They painted their fences and houses, as though paint didn't crack in the parching sun and wash off in the endless rains. Well, he was a newcomer too, and these unshaven, blear-eyed, greasy men looked askance at him. They were waiting, waiting for the veldt to get him. But it wouldn't, he would see to that.

He shifted his pack on his shoulders and strode on briskly. The sun was dropping over the immense expanse of prairie that stretched like a heaving ocean behind him. The blue hills turned purple and the shadows slipped down their rounded flanks and stole out over the flat land to meet him.

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As he pondered over this air of neglect, it seemed to him as though something special in the atmosphere of the veldt dissolved the edges of character. Or was it that infinite succession of monotonous days in the enormous amplitude of space that blunted the time-sense and shook out the knots of habit? There was a danger in these things, a danger he had never thought of. His predecessor at the pit-head, they had told him at mine headquarters before he had left to take charge, had gone slack. Gone slack—everyone here went slack. Men brought up to do certain things

at certain periods of the day and in a certain order forgot even the calendar reckonings. One day was so much like another that it did not matter in the least which day it was or which month of the year it happened to plant itself in. Their clothes flapped around them like scarecrow rags. The soil and the niggers provided them with what they needed to nourish their uncouth bodies. When meat failed they ate yams.

He thought about these things one day as he stood at the pit-head superintending the change of shifts in the dark hole below his feet. He shook his head angrily and set his teeth. He spat upon his hands, picked up a crowbar and shook it at the niggers coming down the hill from the compound, too slowly to suit him. He'd drive them, the black bastards. He'd drive them and drive himself. That was one kind of a man the veldt never got—a driver. He raised his foot and assisted the last nigger on to the wooden elevator with a surprise from behind. Any back talk and he'd smash a skull or two with his crowbar. He stuck his head down the hole and yelled at them as the elevator descended.

He had come out here to Africa to make good—to make money. And things were a good deal harder than he had supposed they would be. He'd like to have a talk with the chap who had written that booklet and stuck the pictures in it. A good talk, so that he might tell him a thing or two. It was a good thing that he had spine enough to swallow his medicine and stick to his guns. That chap who had been in charge here at the pit-head before had been a cave-in. He could

guess what had happened to him—probably scared by the solitude, monotony and the niggers. Or else he had been afraid—afraid of giving in, sinking back, going to pieces under his own nose. Taking nigger women and dressing them up in red rags and calicos and living with them, the way those planters down there in the valleys did. It made him sick at his stomach to think about it. He had seen the little half-caste bastards crawling around the dirty compounds down there. That was one way of going to the dogs that didn't appeal to him. As he thought of it, he shook his head and spat.

He was laying money aside, saving every cent of his wages. When he had enough, he would pull up stakes and go further south. The land was better there. The people were better. The houses had roofs on them, the fences were painted. And still there was land—good land, to be had, almost, for the asking. He would get a good piece of ground with some timber on it to act as a windbreak. He would build his house there. He would get a dozen good niggers and break them, drive them as he was learning to drive this sullen crew here at the mine. He would plough his land and plant it. And only then would he bother his head about women; and then he would get the kind of a woman he wanted.

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There was a girl, a tall girl, living in the compound and she was always about his tent. The niggers who worked in the new mine shaft had brought their women with them as niggers always do. She was the

daughter of his headman. The first time he had seen her, she had brought eggs to his tent. Because he objected to letting niggers within his own little fenced-off plot in the compound, he had sworn at her. She had put the eggs down and looked at him smiling. It wasn't a smile of amusement, it was a pleased, a friendly smile. It seemed as though his anger gave her pleasure.

Thereafter he had given his boy instructions to let her in when she came. She was not as hard to look at as the rest of the native women he had seen. In calicos, in some kind of a bright dress, she might have looked quite well as things went here. He had to laugh when he thought how quickly one of those traders down in the valley would have grabbed her up. She was hardly more than a child but she had a woman's body. And her eyes, he thought, were not at all like the eyes of a nigger. They were large and friendly, like the eyes of a roan that had been tamed. When they rested on his face he was conscious of them. When he walked into his tent, they followed him. When he went to sleep, they appeared in his dreams and then he was most of all aware of them.

Often she sat on the ground, mute and grave, while he smoked his pipe all evening. After a while she stole off timidly, without a glance behind her. He might have raised his voice and called, or sent his boy, and she would come to him, but that would mean that he wanted her, that he was like the rest of the good-for-nothing white men down below there, that he was going native. It would mean that he was getting

slack, going to the dogs. Of course he didn't want her. But at night, his body under the blankets was hot and feverish. There was a wildness in his blood. She would cool the fever, cool his blood as water cools hot iron. He lay awake and the fire outside his tent, burning on its embers, veered and wavered in the cool breeze from the hills. The fire smouldered on through the night hours and above the dark shoulder of the hill the stars shone, bright, hard and inscrutable.

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One morning he awoke and because it was dark in the tent and seemed dark outside, he closed his eyes and dozed again for an hour. During the night he had been conscious of the patter of rain on the canvas roof, blown against it by gusts of wind, and when he awoke the second time it was raining again. He knew what that meant—the coming of the rainy season. Long days and nights when the sky would drip and the veldt below the foothills turn into a vast tract of swamp land. He rose with a feeling of sullen discouragement, and glanced at his watch. The darkness had fooled him, he was an hour late already.

He called for his cook-boy and for his morning tea. When the boy came stumbling into his tent, grinning and rolling his eyes as usual, he snatched the cup out of his hand and started to drink it. The tea tasted rank to him. With a sweep of his arm he threw the scalding mess into the boy's grinning mask of a face and followed his retreating figure with a kick that barely missed him. He walked up the hill to the shaft and the rain beat down on his head and shoul-

ders. Sullen gray clouds drooped over the hills to the east. He turned around and saw that the cloud wrack hung everywhere. Wisps of it clung to the very hill he was standing on. The steamy vapors seemed to roll gradually down the flanks of the higher hills, and the sky over the vast flatland below was like a gray and tumbled ocean.

The first shift had already gone down into the shaft under the charge of its headman and a group of idlers hung about the pit-head. He brushed them aside as though they had been so many cattle, climbed into the rude wooden elevator and started to descend.

He had hardly reached the bottom when a rustling, ripping noise from above caused him to jump and duck. A huge boulder crashed into the bottom of the pit and smashed the floor of the elevator. He jumped into the ruin of it and caused himself to be pulled up, crouching close to the walls of the shaft to dodge the rocks that were still dropping toward him. On top, near the shed of the donkey engine, stood the dozen men of the last shift, waiting to descend. He looked around. There were no loose rocks near the mouth of the shaft. The ones that had crashed down on the elevator must have been thrown. They had tried to kill him. Kill him in a black hole. Now they stood watching him like so many guilty children—too much afraid even to run and scatter.

He snatched up his *shambuck* and walked over toward where they stood in the dripping rain. They had seen him threatening before, and knew that to run only increased his anger. He beat one of them to

a pulp and left two or three others for dead on the ground. Then he went down the hill to his tent and began to pack his boxes mechanically.

When he came out of the tent the girl was standing there, inside the rail of his fence, looking at him. He had mutilated some of her people, but her eyes, wide upon him, were smiling and friendly. He took one step toward her savagely, as though he would drive her out. But she did not flinch. He stood there for a long moment staring at her. He was still blind to what he had done. From somewhere deep within him a sullen remorse was rising as irresistible as a gray flood tide that washes in from a mournful ocean under a fog. When he had cracked his whip on those black bodies he had felt a blinding sense of relief, a dissolution of all his harsh repressions, of that strained, anxious grip on himself which had held him as though in an iron vise by day and tortured him by night. He had been alone with his rage, as a furious god who condemns even before he judges. He had been a civilized being, this man who had come to Africa, and through that one savage gesture, he knew, without knowing why or how he knew, that he had passed judgment on himself forever.

It was too strong . . . too strong for him after all. He was young, and he had come to Africa lured by a dream and by some pictures in bright-colored booklets. He had seen that dream, day by day, lose its color in the face of the vast spaces that his spirit had craved. He had seen how that very vastness could grow appalling, reflecting, as in a mirror of the in-

finite, the smallness of human purposes; transfixing men who lived in it and gazed upon it in the slime of a sluggish indifference, as though they walked by night and day under the gaze of some vast, sullen Medusa. He had clung obstinately to the few instinctive repressions that had guided his life at home only to realize that he was clinging to straws in the released whirlwinds of his own nature. And in one act, savage, violent and dark as the wilderness he had set out to conquer, he had become one with it—a little lower than the lowest of the white men who had sunk so pitifully, a little lower than the black men he had murdered so ruthlessly . . .

She stood there motionless, looking at him, and in her very immobility and in the mute devotion of her eyes, he fancied there was a kind of understanding. Something inside him, something that he felt was hard, turned over suddenly. The muscles that had been set too taut for weeks and months relaxed; his shoulders drooped and he stood there, his underjaw sagging and swaying, looking at her.

When he stumbled off down the hill that night, she followed in his footsteps like a shadow.

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This was the story he told us some weeks later when he came into our compound one evening. He sat silent at first, but one or two drinks loosened his tongue. His face was gaunt and haggard. His clothes were torn and shabby. His eyes had that vacant, lackluster stare of men who have lived in the veldt and gone to pieces.

But as the evening went on he talked more hopefully. There were alluvial fields across the Congo border. He would make his fortune yet, build a house, take a wife, a white wife, make good somewhere in this God-forsaken country. Of course he had a native woman now, the girl who had been friendly toward him . . . perhaps we had noticed her, dressed up in some bright calico prints he had picked up at a trading post on his way up here. But that was nothing for everyone around here, if we had noticed, had black women in calico dresses.

BLACK, WHITE AND GRAY

A straight line from the northern tip of Lake Mweru to the shores of Lake Tanganyika, marks the northern boundary of the province of Rhodesia. Here when the vast district was first thrown open to settlement, lived a border tribe, the Chinyangas. North of them lay Congo land, and to the south the great plains and the mountains, the rapid rivers and deep valleys into which the white men were slowly sifting.

And across the border, in those remote days, came the slave raiders from the east coast of Lake Nyassa. They belonged to the tribe of Yaos, but they were known to the country as "Arabs." They were slaves who had revolted; who had been captured, in their turn, by Arab raiders, and had learned the ways of their former masters.

Those were the days when the railways were not yet built; when a great dominion, 750,000 square miles in extent, larger than Spain, France and Germany put together, had just received its name from the man who had annexed it to the British Empire—Cecil Rhodes. The Cape to Cairo journey was still beyond the limits of the possible, and even the ambitious scheme of the African Transcontinental Telegraph Company was still a dream. But to the south and east of the border, towns were already growing.

And to the south, there was talk of gold and farms, and ranches were breaking into the valleys. But the

remote foothills of the Congo border, across which the "Arabs" swept on their slave raids, drew few white settlers to it. For here was a wildness of veldt, parched in the summer and rank with the growth of elephant grass in the rainy season. Here were the shadows of jungle thickets and the blue loom of tall mountains. Here were upland valleys with falls in them and rushing rivers, good to the eye, and fertile. But everywhere was the rumor of danger, from hostile tribes and the raiders.

And here in the year 1894 there came a lone white man, a trader, to settle.

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He had come from Cape Town in the south, drawn by the lure of this newly opened territory. He had travelled by roads that dwindled into trails, and by trails that became nothing but footpaths. He had lost his oxen, killed by the tse-tse flies, and had gathered together a *safari* of natives. Their way lay over mountains and torrents, through swamps, and by paths that skirted the rank walls of the steaming jungles. And always as he pushed on northward, the sun overhead had grown hotter, and the veldt, wasted and bare in the dry season, more like a parched and desolate desert. At last he had come to a raw new town in the newly opened lands of Rhodesia, a mere mushroom growth of houses, a clutter of boards and corrugated iron, scarring an already desolate and treeless hillside. Here he had settled and worked as a clerk in a trading post, and still the vast and unknown regions to the north had lured him.

For everywhere in the air there hung the rumor of new things, and the talk of gold and of ivory. Every mountain barrier that rose before the wanderer might conceal some promised land behind it. The unexploited tribes still counted among their possessions vast buried treasures of ivory. . . . And as he learned the business of a trader, he began to collect a stock of goods on his own account. He got together calicos and beads, copper wire and bright, tinsel ornaments. He pored over maps and learned as much as was possible from them, the ways of the country and the lay of the land to the northward. One day he shouldered his pack again, and taking some boys with him, some extra guns and a camping outfit, started on the long journey north for the shores of Lake Mweru. He wanted a field untouched as yet, where he could trade in his stock of goods against the ivory which the border tribes were said to possess in abundance, and he was pressing on into regions where few white men had ever ventured. He knew that the risk was great, but he was willing to make the gamble, since the stakes, as he thought, were large.

He knew nothing of the confused disorders of the border, and the raids of the merciless "Arabs." He journeyed north for many days, and came to the shore of Lake Mweru. He pushed through swamps and by cliffs on the lake shore, till he came to the Congo border. And here on a ridge he pitched his tent and set to work on a house of adobe. Here he established his station, and sent his boys into the nearby villages to make contacts with the people, and followed this

with formal visits in person, bringing presents of beads and cloth and cheap trade rifles to the chiefs and elders. Here he was a white man alone, in the matchless desolation of an upland wildness and the people when he walked through the villages crawled from their huts to stare at him, as at a visitation from some strange world; a being white of face and bearded, dressed in curious brown and white garments with such a round, white headdress on top of it all as only a heavenly visitor would think of assuming. They stared and they rubbed their eyes, as though he were a hallucination, something seen but not believed in, that might at any moment vanish.

He settled in the land of the Chinyangas, and began his first post, a crude hut of adobe with two rooms in it, between two of their largest villages. They brought in ivory, reluctantly at first, but gradually in increasing quantities when they saw that he had many strange and colorful things to sell them. He was genial by nature and knew how to humor them and how to win from them a measure of respect in all his dealings. He heard from them talk of the Arabs and their raids, but discounted this danger as one of the many he had made up his mind to face when he first undertook his venture. He was alone here, and there were no other traders around him to outbid him for the ivory that the land and people around him were slowly yielding up. He learned the language of the Chinyangas and listened to all the stories they told him, as he had listened before to the stories of the white adventurers who had yarned to him while he was working at the

trading station. He resolved that come what might the stakes were high enough to make the gamble a good one. Fortune, he had heard, smiled on the bold and if there were any truth in the saying, he was here to test it.

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He made friends with the people, yet they stole from him, and he thought of a way to stop this stealing. He had brought with him from the south a fetish, carved in wood with a gaping mouth and staring eyes, and this fetish he set up in his storeroom. He told the men of the Chinyangas who brought the ivory and leopard skins for barter that this fetish would watch his possessions, and report to him anything that was stolen. And they stared at the round-bellied, grinning figure and shook their heads, for they saw that its round eyes saw everything. But they thought if they bribed the fetish they might win their way to its good graces, so they brought presents of bananas, carefully peeled, so the fetish could eat them, and small pots and gourds of grain and left them at the feet of the figure. And the stealing went on as before, for now they thought its wrath was surely averted. And so he took to hiding behind boxes and lurking in the shadows to watch the marauders. And one day he caught the son of the chief himself, as he was preparing to slip out through the doorway.

He knew the law of the tribe that defined theft as a major crime. And he knew that the old chief of the Chinyangas was a hard man, who played no favorites, even among his children. He took the boy to his

father and the old man called a council of the elders, and they sat on the ground before the chief's hut and considered the matter gravely. Because the hands had stolen the goods, they said, the hands must be cut off at the wrists, but because it was the heart that had prompted the hands in their stealing, the heart must be cut out first. The old chief heard their sentence and nodded gravely and gave orders that his son should be bound hand and foot to await the carrying out of the sentence. And the trader looked at the boy, whose eyes were rolling in his head, but who made no move to open his mouth in protest. And because the boy was young, he felt the enormity of the punishment against the slightness of the offense he had committed. He thought of the worth of the few beads and trinkets and calico strips that the boy had taken, to decorate some black sweetheart or other with; and the offense he had committed seemed as trivial to him as his own childhood transgressions when he had climbed some neighbor's fence to plunder his apple orchard. And so he spoke to the chief and gave him a present, and afterwards addressed the council of elders. He said that he had reconsidered matters and decided to make the boy a present of the goods he had stolen, so that now he was a receiver of gifts and not a thief. The boy, seated on the ground, continued to roll his large eyes, wild with their surprise, but without a flicker of gratitude in them. And the elders looked at the white man in amazement and shook their heads, for they had heard that white men's ways were peculiar and their rules of life perplexing, and this

served to convince them. Even the chief's daughter, Malamba, who had sat on the ground beside her brother, staring at his black arms that were soon to be mutilated, looked at the white man in wonder. And she watched while he gave presents to the elders who were still unconvinced, and her amazement deepened. For surely this was a quaint and unheard-of way of fulfilling the laws of justice to give to a man who had stolen, and to keep on giving to the judges whose duty it was to punish him. And because the action was so strange and so utterly foreign to her nature she could not help looking at the white man's face as he spoke and wondering about him. He was foolish, she thought, but he had persuasion in his words and a kind of power, for when he had finished the elders nodded. He could change the mind of the elders, and alter the will of her father, and never since earliest childhood had she known her father to swerve from a purpose.

And her eyes, as she watched the white man's face grew strange and large with their wonder. The dusk was falling, and the straight, tall trees that rose like a dark wall on the fringe of the village seemed to bend and quiver beneath the accumulating load of shadows. Only to his face, pale among so many dark ones, a little of the departing light seemed to cling, giving it a quality almost luminous; and his eyes, too, she noticed were strange and filled with a light she had never seen in the eyes of her own people. And as she sat there and watched him and thought of the thing he had done for her brother, she felt the appeal of his strangeness as a force, compelling her attention to him, and draw-

ing her will to his purposes, strange and mystifying different from hers and those of her people.

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Months went by, and he was busy with work; never idle for a moment, for he knew that in solitude a habit of idleness grows on a man and brings with it decay and ruin. With the help of his boys he laid out a small plantation and fenced it off. He built on to his station and constructed storesheds for the ivory that kept trickling in from somewhere deep in the interior, carried on the heads and shoulders of black porters by narrow trails across the desolate face of the swamps, across rushing streams and upland torrents, down the long mountain slope, through villages of grass-thatched huts and along the green walls of the steaming jungles. It came slowly, but it came steadily like a thin stream of water that trickles down the flank of a hill from a hidden spring on the summit, and in the dimness of his storesheds he saw the piles of it glowing yellow-white through the accumulated dust of the journey.

It did not come fast enough to suit him and he felt his impatience growing for always the sense of danger and impermanence hung around him with the rumors that kept coming of the sudden inroads of the raiders and the uneasiness of the villages around him. Once, during the night, he was aroused by an alarm of drums from the nearest village; once in the early light of dawn he stumbled over the bodies of two dead spearmen beside the trail and saw in the grass of the veldt the tracks of some barefooted host that had slipped

silently past his house during the night; and several times, after dusk, he thought to descry the smoke and amber flare of burning villages against the sky. But he kept to his business steadily, started a small garden and planted corn for the coming harvest. He forgot the incident of the chief's son and the stealing, and he tried, as time went on, to content himself with his work and the feeling of growth that it brought him.

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The house he had built hastily of clay had two rooms and a roof of thatch. The larger of these rooms he used for storing his goods and for trading, and in the smaller he slept and ate. It had two small windows high up and narrow so that the leopards could not squeeze in through them, but the moonlight, flooding through, filled the room with a pale, still brilliance and one night as he lay not yet asleep he saw a shadow gliding across one of these windows and this shadow had the form of a woman.

He had heard no sound at the door and the footfalls on the floor of the chamber made no sound as he lay with bated breath and listened. Yet he was aware that she was moving slowly, crouching, and advancing toward his bed with its cover of mosquito netting. She seemed to pause as she advanced, and take in the objects of the room, the rough table and chairs built of packing cases, the bed with its gauze-like canopy, and he saw her hand go out and stroke the netting as though she were wondering at it. He started from bed, but she did not shrink back as he had expected. She rose slowly from her crouching position, and stood

squarely in the track of the moonlight that fell slanting through the window. He recognized her face and form among the hundreds of black faces he had seen in the village, for she was tall, with features that were almost aquiline, a skin that was brown rather than black and a certain grace to her movements. He knew that she was the daughter of the chief whose son had stolen from him and whose life he had saved when they had wished to mutilate and kill him, and he called her name, in a voice of astonishment, "Malamba."

He had learned to speak but not to understand entirely the language of the Chinyangas and it was her gestures, at first, rather than her words, that spoke to him of the danger from which she wished to save him. For the "Arabs" she said had planned a new and larger raid for slaves and plunder across the border and deep into the land to the south of them. And her father, the Chief of the Chinyangas, had agreed, for a share of the spoils, to share the dangers of the venture with them. But first they must capture the white man and his precious stock of guns and powder. And they must kill him, for if he escaped their hands he would spread the warning, and other white men to the south would come up against them with soldiers and rifles. And on this the Arab chief and her father had agreed sitting near the fire that night while the wind sighed through the dark trees overhead and the rapid river near at hand filled the night with its rushing. Her father had talked and debated, weighing the matter in his mind slowly and ponderously, as an old chief who had survived many battles and had counted

the cost of every enterprise that concerned his people. They had talked of the white man and his growing power in the land, and of the disasters that had happened to the great tribes to the southward before Lo Bengula's death when his hordes of Matabeles were defeated. The Arab chief had foreseen the day when even the ridge country of the Chinyangas would be taken over in the irresistible march of the invaders, and when he said this she had seen her father's eyes smouldering with a red light in them like the light of the dying fire. She knew that he would not hesitate when his blood was up, for had he not been prepared to have the hands of her brother cut off and a knife plunged through his heart when he had stolen from the white man those many moons ago? And now he was planning in his mind the death of the white man who had saved her brother, the man who had spoken to her father words of wisdom and of power, the man who of all the men she had ever seen was the strangest, the man on whose face she had looked and wondered and whose face kept coming back to her in her thoughts.

She looked on his face now, standing in the crowded shadows of his little room, in the single bar of moonlight through the window. And he, looking back at her, knew she spoke the truth for in her eyes was the look of a timid animal that wonders at its master. And he felt moved toward her, this man who had forgotten white faces; who had almost forgotten the tenderness of women and their devotion. He was moved, and he did not know how to thank her, and

awkward, for he was not sure what dangers she might have incurred through her desire to help him. He walked out of the room to waken his boys and bid them prepare for the journey. And when he returned, she had slipped off, silently as the uncertain agitation of shadows caused by the wavering of tree boughs across the track of the moonlight.

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There were two trails that he might take in the flight for safety he had resolved on. The one lay across hills and uplands, and was used in the rainy season. The other ran down from the hills and cut straight into the veldt and was only used months after the rains were over.

He knew that this trail would be dangerous, for the rivers were still glutted and swollen with the recent heavy downpours. He knew that the waterholes, the small, stagnant ponds, infested with flies and mosquitoes, half grown over with rank vegetation, muddy and loathsome to drink from, would still be swamps, steaming under the sullen noonday sunlight, breeding reptiles and noisome insects. He knew that he would have to make his way through them in constant danger from animals and from the fevers that seemed to rise on the steamy vapors from the black mud and evil waters. But he thought that these dangers were the lesser of the two, for along the upper road they would surely pursue him.

He set to work at once and started a *caché* in the forest beside his clearing to bury the trade goods that still remained to him, and all of his precious ivory.

He would cover the spot carefully, he thought, and strew twigs and leaves over it. He worked feverishly with his two boys in the black shadow thickets, with the great lamp of the moon, swung up between tree boughs, giving them what light they needed. And as he worked, he listened. For the night had come to life around him.

It had taken shape as of some huge and shadowy terror rearing above him and around him, ready to spring or fall and crush him. And he knew that this shape had a heart, for he could hear its rhythmical beating. He had no time to pause or shrug and tell himself that this sound he heard was only the beating of the village tom-tom. For it was not the sound itself, but its reiteration, its monotony and persistence, that was maddening. He worked on in a sort of a fury; a fury to get done and an anger because he felt that the panic in his limbs might grow uncontrollable if he had to listen too long to that rhythmic, insistent throbbing. The night seemed strange to him, and its experiences here in this place of moonlight and shadows seemed terrifying and unbelievable. There had been the apparition of the girl, Malamba, in his room and her tale of danger; and then the strangeness of the feeling she had stirred in him. The whole of the circumstances of the night, his very presence in this forest place, the feverishness of his activity, the grunts of his sweating boys, goaded and strained by his own curious panic, was touched with unreality like the unreality of moonlight on water. And now the throbbing of the drum in the distance had crept into his

veins; and his heartbeat seemed to respond to it; it seemed as if this, and nothing else, were the motivating force behind his urgency for flight.

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He finished and packing for the journey was the work of a moment only. He ate what food he could find, the dried meat and cold flour-paste of last night's supper. His boys ate with him, squatting on their haunches surprised at the white man's curious haste and his mysterious trepidation. They shrugged and murmured together as they hoisted their loads on their heads and started off down the trail behind him. They slipped through the night, soundless and trackless as shadows. And behind them followed another shadow, and this was the woman, Malamba. . . .

The moon swam high, clear and cold as they passed from the bush to the swamp. From the marshy land a mist touched with silver was rising and rolling off toward a tumble of low black hills like frozen waves of an ocean.

And the panic that had fastened itself on the white man wore off with every step he took away from the drumbeat. He could hear it still, but its rhythm seemed slower and its voice was fainter. The great dark terror whose heart was the insistent drumbeat was slowly, slowly dying. If he had only thought about it before, that drumbeat was the sign of his safety, for they would not leave the village to surround his house and kill him until after the dance was over. His muscles gradually relaxed but he strode forward cautiously because already the trail lay wet

and muddy underfoot. And now the thickets of elephant grass were beginning, towering high and still above them. On all sides lurked the menace of wild beasts, and underfoot the menace of snakes. But still the way he had taken was safer than the trail through the uplands, where the pursuit was bound to follow them. . . . They pressed on quickly, alone, as they thought, for Malamba gave no sign that she was following.

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In the lonely places of the earth, in the veldt or the African uplands, where men, cut off from their fellows, are thrown together in twos and threes, each man's history becomes the property of the others simply and inevitably.

The wise treasure the experiences of their past, the adventures that touch on the extraordinary, even their anecdotes, dealing them out parsimoniously, for a story once heard may never be told twice to the same person and the sins of forgetfulness are not easily forgiven. For men who are thrown together in the lonely places get easily on each other's nerves; and men who can be friends in a city often find a solitude nothing but a breeding place for irritation and hostility. The babbler spills his tales and is done with, a fountain that spouts lavishly and then runs dry. The bore, the man without resource or reflective power becomes a sort of walking sore and irritation to be avoided like a dread disease.

When I met him thirty-five years after his flight

from the border country he was a patriarchal figure, and loneliness had bred in him a detachment and extraordinary powers of observation. He told me his story, not because he viewed it as remarkable, not because he was given to long introspections, but because in the course of our intimacy and friendship it seemed advisable to him that I should know the truth about him. He did not offer it as a whole, but in fragments. It was not a defense of himself nor an extenuation of certain parts of his life that lay under a veil or a shadow. That veil or shadow was not his own creation, but rather a condition forced on him, at a much later period, by the world he had turned his back on.

He had weathered the countless vicissitudes of a lonely pioneer existence by virtue of a certain ruggedness of character, a faith in himself. I did not know when I came to know his story in its entirety from him whether his life was a success or a tragedy. Perhaps no life is subject to such rigid distinctions; perhaps all lives share a little of both; and the circumstances of his entire career, even of his survival, had a savor of the fantastic about them. But he had survived and prospered, building for himself a garden in the wilderness and he had kept a grip on himself through the strangest vicissitudes of fortune like the grip of a vise on iron. He had settled on a hillside, well south of the danger zone and the Chinyanga country, and here he had built a house, and it was his fortress and his citadel.

It was large, that house, and imposing with walls

of brick and a high-peaked roof of slate and its presence there on a hillside was a wonder to the natives and a mystery. For miles around the people came to look at it, and they called it "the-hut-to-be-gazed-on." It faced inward on a fenced and protected compound, and showed a black, eyeless wall to the veldt around it. And at night, as the natives looked into the compound, they saw torch fires burning inside to light it, and these torch fires were the greatest mystery of all, for he had installed an electric light plant. You could touch these torches, they said, and they would not burn you, and they gave off neither smoke nor ashes. He had cattle fattening in his pastures and fruitful trees in his orchard. And here he lived like a king or patriarch of old in his solitude.

He had fled from the border mountains, pressing through the swamp land to the low slopes of the Irumis. He had settled here and built up his farm and his orchard and begun anew his trading. He had thrived year after year and prospered, as I could see from the face of things around him. And here it was that for many days he showed me his hospitality, a genial, kindly host, alert for my every comfort, attentive yet never obtrusive. And here in his long, dark living room, with its low smoke-blackened rafters, we sat by the fire at night and he talked of the ways of Africa and its incredible dealings with those who would become its masters.

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Adjoining the brick house, the "hut-to-be-gazed-on," were long, low-roofed structures of adobe, form-

ing, with the main building, three sides of the compound. One of these buildings gave shelter to the livestock and shelter for the farm implements, and the other was stocked with goods for trading. And here, perched high on a shelf, surveying the rows of boxes, the tinware, the bright, cheap trinkets displayed below, watching the store and all who entered, was a small wooden fetish with staring eyes, a round-bellied grinning figure.

Extending the storeshed to the north and at an angle from it, was another house of adobe, with its windowed face turned inward and its back to open country. And this house became a mystery to me, for I was never asked to visit it.

It was a tenuous, a veiled prohibition that never issued from the lips of my host except in roundabout fashion. I had noticed that as time went on there were some topics of conversation on which he showed a strange and unusual reticence. Whenever I referred to this house of adobe, he stopped talking or else changed the topic abruptly. Yet I had heard voices issuing from this building and at night had seen light streaming from its windows. And often at night I had seen him crossing the compound and stooping to enter its doorway. As time went on and my visit that was to have been a matter of days lengthened into weeks and then into months, an air of mystery began to attach to that building.

There were other things, too, that were curious. One was the persistence of an optical illusion that came to me often as I strolled through the orchard.

In Africa, where illusions and mirages are in the nature of things everywhere, I was inclined at first to regard this as hardly worth my passing attention. It kept recurring. It was astonishing, and it aroused my interest.

For as I walked through the garden, I fancied I saw children playing under the trees. I thought I heard their voices, and noticed that they were dressed like a white man's children. I fancied that as I turned to look at them they disappeared; their voices that a moment before had sounded in my ears a curious jargon of wild cries and childish phrases, fell into silence, and I was alone in that silence in the shade and sunlight of the orchard.

As I have said, it seemed to me like an absurd illusion, and if it had occurred once or twice, I should have dismissed it. But it occurred again and again at irregular intervals, sometimes in the early morning, when the crisp light of dawn still lingered on the blue mountain slopes; sometimes at dusk when the great sun hung over the black western ranges and flooded the sky with crimson light and sent the long shadows hurrying across the veldt. I took to glancing over my shoulder whenever I passed through the orchard, as though I really believed it to be haunted. I had heard tales of the improbable enough in my life, and ghost stories, and I had heard how some places of the earth still retained the images of events and forms that have passed and left their impression there. The illusion occurred again one day in the full light of the afternoon sunshine, and this time it startled me. For this

time I heard the voices but could not see the faces, and when I ran to the place from whence the voices had seemed to come there was nothing there but a silence, a few bird notes, a rustling of the wind in the leaves, a dapple of sun pools all around on the leafy ground beneath the tree stems.

And I took to wondering about this occurrence in the slight strangeness of things around me. It made a link in my mind with the small, mysterious things I had noticed before, the house I was never allowed to visit, and from the windows of which at night lights and voices issued, the strange aloof preoccupation of my host when he fell into his brooding silences now and then at meal times, the far-away sad light in his deep-set brown eyes; the whole atmosphere of the man that was at once kindly and at the same time tragic and even forbidding.

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It seemed to me altogether unworthy to keep my unreasoned suspicions and illusions from one who had shown me a wealth of honest kindliness, and I approached him one day while he was working in the storeroom, and told him what I had seen and heard.

The ancient wooden fetish, with its broad, brutal grin, its protruding eyes and heavy features stared down at us and at the dust, cobwebs and shadows of the long low room, littered with bales and boxes, with trade goods and implements of the farm. He was bending over, ripping the boards from a crate that he had brought in with him the day before from the railhead, seventy miles to the south. He straightened

and wiped the dust from his hands. His face and eyes were hard. His voice was grave and courteous.

"You are going to be my guest for some time," he said, "and I think that it is time you knew the truth of things that might otherwise reach you through gossip. When I have finished, you may want to leave my house. That is your privilege, and it will occasion no ill-feeling on my part. I have had that happen before, you see, and am used to it. But your illusion, as you call it, was quite real. You did see children and they are mine. But they have been trained to run and hide from the white man. And in this they are as skilful"—he paused for a moment—"they are as skilful as little animals or as wild children from the bush.

"I have told you about the woman Malamba, who warned me of the danger from the raiders and from her father. It sounded strange to you, that story, and romantic." He paused again. "Well, those children you have seen are the result of that 'romance.' Like every other romance, I suppose, it has two sides." He spoke very gently. "I did not tell you that Malamba has lived with me now for thirty-five years, for I owed my life to her not once but twice, and those are things one cannot lose sight of very easily."

And he went on very slowly and musingly, as a man who likes to linger over memories, to bridge over the gaps in the disconnected narrative of his life. He told me how Malamba, afraid to return to her father's village that night when she had told him of the danger—that night over thirty-five years ago now—had

followed after him for two days through the swamp lands. He said that, while they were struggling on under the fierce morning sunlight of the third day, the blackwater fever had suddenly come over him, and he had struggled to throw it off, pressing on blindly, and had fallen, suddenly overcome by the sunlight, exhaustion and the disease. His black boys, he said, had taken one look at his face, and then had taken to their heels, thinking that he was dead and afraid of being found near the corpse of a white man. . . . She had brought them back. She had convinced them that he was not dead. She set them to work making a shelter to get him out of the sun, and had made a kind of bed of dried rushes in it. Then she had put them to work, constructing a regular hut, and in the meantime had gone out and collected the herbs her people used as medicine. A couple of weeks went by before he came out of his delirium. But when he did come to, finally, there was a roof over his head and walls of dried mud to keep the heat of the sun out, and she was standing there looking down at him. . . .

So he owed his life to her twice over, and since she had betrayed her father to come to him, she had no one else to turn to. He had taken her with him, and in so far as such things are possible, made a home with her . . . It was not a perfect home, but then . . . well . . . beggars could hardly be choosers, and in the wilderness, if one wished to survive, one was pretty much forced to take things as he found them. . . .

"And now," he concluded, "I shall show you my

family, and as I said to you before, if you want to leave as some others have wanted to when they have heard this story, that is your privilege, and you will take with you no ill-will but only regret that you decided not to stay longer. . . ."

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I stayed, and that night as we sat before the fire he told me more of the story of Malamba. He told me how, after they had settled here and built the "hut-to-be-gazed-on," with the help of the friendly Lalas, Malamba had urged him to take other women as wives from the nearby tribes. For the people were already coming from far and near to see his magnificent house and its compound, and with his outbuildings, his orchards and cattle, he was a great chief in their eyes. It was not fitting, she said, that a great chief should have only one wife, and so she had gone to the headman of the nearest village and bargained with him for his daughter, and afterward she had procured him other wives. These girls she had chosen because they were young and handsome, and she had brought them to him. He had then built the large house of adobe, the one I had noticed and wondered about, for these women and the many children that he had from them. And this was the secret of the house that I had never visited, and of the illusion of children's faces and voices in the orchard.

For, as he explained to me, when he had first settled here there were no other white men within a journey of many days, and he was a law unto himself in the wilderness. Then the railroad had been pushed

through from the south within seventy miles of him, and with it settlement had begun. The land was good for fruit and cattle and the settlers had built permanent homes and brought their wives and families to live with them. And where he had been a man alone in a strange place of the earth, he was no longer alone, but a pioneer in a scattered and lonely community.

And suddenly he realized that his scale of values, adopted in the stress of solitude, was utterly changed. For where before he had been a white man among black people, he was now a white among whites, and he must keep the facts of his life from them. For the black women that white men take when they come into lonely places they cast off like worn-out shoes or garments gone threadbare when they return to the society of their own kind or when the settlement of the country begins to bring pressure to bear upon them. And these women wander back to their tribes or families with their litters of half-caste children who are either absorbed into the tribe again, drift off to the towns to join the "colored" portion of the population there or swell the ranks of the half-caste nations, the Griquas or Bastaards.

He had put his ancestry, his traditions, his associations, completely out of his life as he thought, and adopted a way of life suited to the country. There was no other way. He had become a "White Native," merging himself completely with the land and its ways; a patriarch with his herds and his wives and his growing family of children.

And here, as I came to see it, was his problem, per-

haps his tragedy. He had built his life securely on principles that were suited to the land and its conditions. When conditions altered and he wished to alter and readjust his life to meet them, he could not, for his feeling toward the woman who had saved his life was one of gratitude and loyalty, and this counted with him more than contentment. He had wanted to take a white wife and there were marriageable women living in the towns that were growing near the railhead, and he was prosperous, a good match for any of them. But some made it a condition that he put away his black wives and his children; and others looked at him in faintly concealed horror as a man who had "gone native." They could not understand that he had acted as necessity and not desire had dictated. They could not understand how one could be grateful to a black woman, a creature of an inferior order. He was wise enough and tolerant enough to see that their prejudices were inborn in them. He came to understand that the very least a white woman could demand would be to start in life afresh with him. But he could not adjust this demand to the demands his loyalty made upon him. He could not shuffle aside these living witnesses of his past, these dark companions of his solitude, as though they were pawns in a game he was tired of playing. And so the future lay ahead of him like a gray and sunless horizon.

For he was no longer young. He could not always work as he had worked and was still working to make a garden grow in the wilderness. The day would come

when he could no longer labor, and his children should take the burden from him. He could not sell out and return to some settled place to pass his declining years, for no settled place would receive him and his black wives and brood of gray and yellow children. He needed sons he could trust, sons of his own blood and tradition, to take over the work he had begun, for he had a pride in his difficult achievements. And what had he?

His children from infancy had been taught to cringe before the white man and fear him. They had been taught to run and hide on the approach of a stranger, for they were part of a secret that must not be spread abroad. They were a strange brood, for even their mothers were afraid of them. For they were brown, not black, and the only children these women had seen were black. They belonged to the white man, they said, but not to them, for they were more nearly his color. And I could see for myself, he said, the results of this attitude on the mothers' part and of the constant necessity for cringing concealment in his sons. He did not trust them; they were foreign to him and he to them, despite their mission training, despite the English they spoke and the white man's clothing they wore. And the girls had been brought up by their mothers. They were light in color and dark in mind, and whether their mothers would own them or not they had played from infancy as African children play; they had grown up in the lore and the dark, cryptic beliefs of their mothers' tribes. They rebelled against all the restrictions he sought to impose on them

in matters of clothing and manners. They wished, they said, to follow the laws of their mothers, and their mothers' customs. They were growing into womanhood, and already casting glances at the black boys who worked in his fields and orchards. They had the right to intercourse on maturity with their mothers' permission, according to the laws of the tribes in these matters, and they resented their father's prohibitions. They ate and slept with their mothers. He had done his best, and he could not resign himself to what must inevitably happen except in anger and in brooding inner rages. For the law of the land which he had followed in "going native" had now turned against him and his children, and instead of going white they were going black again.

And they were strangers to him and hostile at times; these sons of his who ate with him in the large dining room of the brick house, and these daughters who ate and slept with their mothers.

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One night I lay in my room in the brick house reading in bed, preparing for slumber. At supper he had seemed more fatigued than usual, and preoccupied with one of those moods of brooding anxiety which so often afflicted him. He had gone out while the black boy was clearing off the table, as he said, to take a look around the compound, for the night before we had heard the voices of lions among the more familiar, casual voices of the veldt and he was anxious for the safety of his cattle. When he did not return after an hour, I rose and retired to my bedroom. It was about

eleven o'clock when he knocked and asked if he might come in and talk to me.

He came in and stood by my bed. His smile was as courteous as ever, but the gaze of his brown eyes was fixed and absent and hard, and there were furrows on his brow as though he were inwardly frowning. He had something curious to show me, he said, if I would come out with him for just a few moments. I got out of bed at once and pulled on my clothes. The night voices from the veldt drifted into the room very clearly, the barking of jackals and the discordant laugh of hyenas, and remembering the nearness of lions, I reached for my gun in the corner. He shook his head, as though to say I would not need it, but I took it and an electric torch with me. We walked out into the compound, under a hard, cold glimmer of starlight. The night was cool and black; the moon had not yet risen, and no wind was stirring. He opened the gate and slipped out into the open immensity of the veldt, and I followed him as he turned sharply to follow the line of the fence. Light was streaming out of the small hole used as an airshaft in the back of the women's quarters, and as we reached this spot he paused for a moment and stood there listening. I could hear a meaningless confusion and babble of voices from inside, and as he listened he nodded slowly. Then he crouched down on the ground near the wall of the building, and motioned me to sit down beside him.

Around us lay the shapes of things unknown and mysterious and the rolling, shadowy spaces of the

veldt under the starlight. We sat for a long time neither moving nor speaking and suddenly across the darkness came a rustling noise and a soft padding of footfalls. I cocked my gun, and he laid a hand on my arm, and his fingers dug into my flesh, as the soft footfalls drew closer. I strained my eyes to see what the darkness threatened us with, sure that it was some wild animal stalking us through the shadows. But his eyes, better trained to the African night than mine, had seen what I could not see: the shape of a tall girl advancing slowly and cautiously toward the adobe building against which we were leaning. And suddenly he took the torch from my hand and flashed its light full in the face of his oldest daughter. She had discarded her white woman's dress and wore the dress of her mother's tribe: the bark cloth blanket of the Chinyangas. She stood there cowering before him with hate and fear in her eyes, and suddenly he raised his fist and struck, and as she fell, struck her again in the face. And without a word or a sound he strode off toward the gate of the compound.

. . . . . .

That night and his sudden act of violence summed up for me the hidden story of those lonely half-savage years of his, the stern years of his pioneer labor, his unswerving loyalty to the black woman who had saved him, his dreams that had no fruitage beyond his present prosperity. For his daughter whom he had wanted to bring up as a white woman had gone black and he would no longer recognize her or speak to her. The events of that night vanished from memory, for he

never referred to them and I had no desire to. He was the courteous host again the next morning, affable, glad to be with me. But now I saw his life in one flash in its entirety, whereas before I had seen only fragments. . . .

I left when the month was up, and it was almost a year later when I visited my courteous friend at the "house-that-is-to-be-gazed-upon." It was early afternoon when I opened the gate, and the dusty compound was almost deserted. But before the door of the women's quarters his oldest daughter was sitting, sullenly nursing a baby at her breast. She raised her head at the sound of my footsteps, gazed at me for a moment, and then turned her head away.

The child that she was holding against her brown breast was black, black as the African night that draws the light of veldt and jungle and river to a bosom of darkness—black as though no drop of white blood flowed through its veins, as though the immense and formless sea of dark blood had swallowed it forever.

APPENDIX

NOTES ON THOMAS, SON OF GOD

The extracts that follow are from Raymond Leslie Buell's "The Native Problem in Africa," published by the Macmillan Company, a summary of government and district reports from all sections of South Africa.

. . . "Native organizations, it is said, are rapidly spreading throughout Northern Rhodesia, and one fanatical religious movement, which some people believe to be entirely European in character, has arisen. This is the Watch Tower movement which first put in its appearance in Nyasaland about 1908. Eight years later, it was connected with the Chilembwe revolt. It has since spread to parts of the Congo, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia. The movement appears to be animated by the "Millennium Dawn" doctrine of Pastor Russell and his followers in America and Europe. It also believes in immersion. Some native preachers connected with the movement, interpreting the Old Testament literally, assert that the Europeans are the modern Nebuchadnezzars who will eventually be overcome. In Rhodesia, other Watch Tower preachers, declaring the war was anti-Christian, advocated passive resistance to the government requisition for porters during the World War. Forty of them were placed in jail in Livingstone for preaching this doctrine. The movement has also been puritanical in nature—it has demanded severe moral standards, and it requires a minute knowledge of the

Bible. At Livingstone, a Watch Tower preacher recently baptized 400 natives in the local river they call Jordan. *In the Fall of 1925, another Watch Tower leader, declaring himself to be the Son of God, preached the doctrine that in order to gain eternal life man must first die. As a result of his exhortation, about one hundred and seventy natives deliberately drowned themselves in a river near the Congo—Rhodesia border.* This led both the Congo and Rhodesian governments to make efforts to apprehend the leader who was the cause of these deaths. The Rhodesian officials finally arrested and sentenced the leader to death. The general policy of the Rhodesian government is to tolerate the movement until its members definitely violate law and order." (Vol. I, p. 242, *et seq.*)

CHILEMBWE'S REVOLT

"In 1915 a rising occurred in Nyasaland led by a native named John Chilembwe, who was educated in the United States in a negro Baptist seminary. The religious tenets of certain European and American missions, such as the Church of Christ Mission, the Seventh Day Baptist Mission and the Watch Tower Movement—which taught that the end of the world was at hand—apparently had some influence in provoking the arising. Under the influence of their teaching, Chilembwe formed a mission of his own and hoped to link together a number of independent native sects. He eventually planned to have the people on

certain estates kill their masters. Chilembwe himself cut off the head of one estate manager, and preached a sermon with it before him on the pulpit. The revolt was quickly suppressed and twenty natives executed." (*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 247, *et seq.*)

NOTE ON NAMES

The native accepts a name much as he accepts a gift or ornament, wearing it until he is a little tired of it or thinks it has worn out. On *safari* we were often asked by our boys and porters who had tired of their old names to give them new ones. Kosamu, our cook-boy, who had received his name (derivative of Thomas) from the missionaries, was especially anxious to make a change. I suggested "Hot Dog." He departed, well pleased, and was known thereafter as "Hot Doggie."

Most of the names that natives receive, when they are not simply handed down at birth, have a definite significance. Kunda, for example, which is used in "The Marriage of Kunda," means "wagon." The application here is a little obscure. Much more explicit is the name of Wambue, for our head-boy, for Wambue means bugle.

Here are a few names of common occurrence in their English equivalent.

Not Much to Say	Wagon
Empty Jail	Wire
Bugle	Fish Face

Talk Too Much
Bad Roads
When Did You Come?
Cut My Pay
Shut Up
Big Box
Lots of Jabber
Weary Walker

Carl von Hoffman.

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